

# THE THOMAS FAMILY

—OF—

Hilltown, Bucks County, Penn'a.

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BY EDWARD MATHEWS.

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THE THOMAS FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.

i

PREFACE.

The production of this historical and genealogical work concerning a once prominent and numerous family of Bucks county, Pennsylvania, owes its incitement to its publisher, who induced the writer to undertake the task. Although accustomed to the writing of local and family history, the author experienced much difficulty in its compilation, owing to lack of knowledge concerning certain branches of the family. The genealogy is necessarily incomplete in these respects. The writer's previous investigations concerning the local history of the region concerned has greatly facilitated in the preparation of the work. The official records and registry of deeds and wills at the county seat have been searched, as well as many ancient documents, worn and discolored by the fingers of time, which have been opportunely placed at the writer's disposal. Frequently, pedestrian journeys have been made over localities identified with the early settlement of the family, whilst in the venerable graveyards of Hilltown and New Britain the marble memorial stones have mutely and silently given information of the past. Various persons connected with the family by ties of relationship have furnished valuable facts concerning their ancestors. To a number of landholders of Hilltown we are indebted for legal documents and other information relating to lands once owned by the Thomas Family. At the outset it was intended to make the account much more brief than it grew to be, owing to a failure to realize the magnitude of the work and of the number of people that may descend from a single pair within a century and a half. Certain portions will be of interest to the public generally, but other chapters will attract only the descendants of the family. More than to all others we are indebted to the historical writings of Rev. Joseph Mathias; which indeed form the basis of the work. Mr. Mathias showed indefatigable zeal and industry in collecting and preserving very much concerning the earlier and later annals of the region of Bucks county first settled by the Welsh. Amid the labors of a busy life, as a farmer, clergyman, and missionary, during his hours of leisure, he collected a large amount of information that otherwise would have been lost in oblivion. A cast of mind, prosaic and matter of fact rather than imaginative and theoretical, he was fitted for researches requiring accuracy of detail, and possessed a retentive memory of dates and names that made his records nearly always accurate and reliable. These were only intended for his own family and relatives, contain-

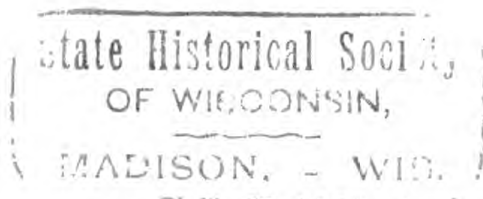
ing many details not interesting to the general public. They have never been printed, though copied in part by several persons. The more important portions of his work are contained in this volume, interwoven, it is true, with much that is new. The record of Mathias closed half a century ago. The present writer has, where practicable, added supplementary information, bringing it down to a more recent period. The acquisition of lands by the first members of the Thomas Family, their location, extent, and the time when purchased, has never before been recorded. So far as possible, some personal traits of the old-time worthies have been obtained, as well as various legends of the past. Owing to the prodigious number of names and dates entering into such a history, it is almost inevitable that errors should have crept in, but the effort has been to make it as nearly correct as possible. Indeed dates form the frame-work of all historical writings, and their absence or general incorrectness would be fatal to their value. In recording these historical memoirs and genealogical facts of family history, the writer has been incited not only by the necessity of collecting and preserving, ere lost, the fast vanishing story of the age that is past, but by the attractive interest which these researches presented to his own mind. In such humble collections as these, the materials of the more pretentious future histories of a larger scale are formed. The generations that are to come after us, less engrossed in the struggle for material possessions, more cultivated, intelligent and refined, will take far greater interest than the present in the annals of our early family history, and will read and treasure up with pleasure and delight every scrap of information, however imperfectly written, long after the actors of the living present have mouldered into dust.

E. M.

NORTH WALES, PA., October 20th, 1883.



THE THOMAS FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.



# CONTENTS.

PREFACE.....	Page <i>i-ii</i>
CHAPTER I.	
DIFFERENT FAMILIES OF THE NAME OF THOMAS IN BUCKS COUNTY—THE TORY THOMAS FAMILY—THE NAME AND ORIGIN—REV. WILLIAM THOMAS AND HIS EMIGRATION TO AMERICA—HIS PURCHASE OF LAND IN HILLTOWN....	I
CHAPTER II.	
THE SETTLEMENT IN HILLTOWN—THE TOWNSHIP OF HILLTOWN—THE LOCA- TION OF THE SEVERAL TRACTS PURCHASED BY WILLIAM THOMAS—SUB- DUING THE WILDERNESS AND THE ERECTION OF DWELLINGS.....	5
CHAPTER III.	
CAREER OF WILLIAM THOMAS IN HILLTOWN—ERECTION OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH —HIS MINISTRY—HIS LAST WILL AND DEATH.....	10
CHAPTER IV.	
THOMAS THOMAS—THE LANDS HE HELD—HIS MARRIAGE, LAST WILL AND DEATH.....	16
CHAPTER V.	
THE CHILDREN AND DESCENDANTS OF THOMAS THOMAS. ....	19
CHAPTER VI.	
REV. JOHN THOMAS.....	28
CHAPTER VII.	
THE CHILDREN OF REV. JOHN THOMAS.....	33

# THE THOMAS FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.

## CONTENTS—Continued.

CHAPTER VIII.	
EPHRAIM THOMAS.....	36
CHAPTER IX.	
CHILDREN OE EPHRAIM THOMAS.....	39
CHAPTER X.	
MANASSEH THOMAS.....	46
CHAPTER XI.	
CHILDREN OF MANASSEH THOMAS.....	48
CHAPTER XII.	
WILLIAM THOMAS, JUNIOR.....	50
CHAPTER XIII.	
WILLIAM THOMAS, THIRD.....	52
CHAPTER XIV.	
ANNA THOMAS.....	55
CHAPTER XV.	
GWENTLY THOMAS.....	57
CHAPTER XVI.	
THE CHILDREN OF GWENTLY THOMAS.....	59
CHAPTER XVII.	
THE GRIFFITH FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.....	67

## ERRATA.

“Returning” and “removing,” on page 2, seventh and eighth lines from top, should read “returned” and “removed.”

“Bucks,” on page 5, third line from top, in second column, should read “Berks.”

On page 8, nineteenth line from top, the word “northwest” is omitted after perches.

On page 15, twelfth line from bottom, second column, the words “as trustees” are omitted.

# The Thomas Family of Hilltown.

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## CHAPTER I.

DIFFERENT FAMILIES OF NAME OF THOMAS IN BUCKS COUNTY—THE TORY THOMAS FAMILY—THE NAME AND ITS ORIGIN—REV. WILLIAM THOMAS, AND HIS EMIGRATION TO AMERICA—HIS PURCHASE OF LAND IN HILLTOWN.

The family concerning which this narrative aims to give an account were among the first settlers of Hilltown, Bucks county, and afterwards became quite numerous and influential in that township. At the present day its descendants are scattered far and wide in different parts of the United States engaged in all the ordinary walks of life, whilst many have held or are holding positions of trust, responsibility and honor. Comparatively few of these descendants yet remain in the regions familiar to their ancestors, and only a small portion of the lands the latter held and cultivated are yet in the possession of the posterity of those who first subdued the wilderness.

There were several different families of the name who first settled in Bucks county at an early day. These lived in Richland, Plumstead, and other portions, whilst there was another Thomas family also in Hilltown, but in nowise related. Lewis Thomas and Evan Thomas, both Welshmen, were among the earlier settlers of Hilltown holding lands in the western portion,

near Rieff's corner, and eastward of the village of Telford. Evan's son, Richard, succeeded him and they remained up to the time of the Revolution. They were not Baptists as were the other family of which this history relates. They were large land-holders, were esteemed wealthy and aristocratic, and held a number of slaves. On the upper Bethlehem turnpike, half a mile above the divergence of that highway from the county line, near the blacksmith shop of Leonard Smith, was the family grave yard, where besides some whites a considerable number of their slaves were buried. This burial place has now been ploughed over, and there is little to indicate that it was once the place of interment of a prominent and wealthy family of colonial days. When the Revolutionary war broke out the sons of Richard Thomas, William and Evan became Tories and entered the British army. The former was a captain, and the latter accepted a commission and raised a troop of horsemen. He made several incursions into Bucks county, and was

at the Battle of Crooked Billet (Hatt-boro), May 15, 1778. Their lands were confiscated by their treason, and at the close of the war they accepted other lands in Nova Scotia from the British government. Evan Thomas afterwards returning to Hilltown and removing his family thither.

#### THE NAME AND ITS ORIGIN.

Thomas is a surname derived from the parent's Christian name. It is one of the sixty most common names in England and Wales, among which it ranks as the seventh. That of Smith, Brown, Davis, Jones, Taylor and Williams alone being more numerous. It also ranks seventh as among the most common baptismal names. In Scotland it assumes the form of Thompson, and ranks sixth on the list of most common surnames there. Says Lower, "though not in use prior to the Norman conquest, it has become one of the commonest of baptismal appellatives and surnames. Some of the Welsh families of Thomas are of high antiquity, through the surname is in all cases of comparatively recent assumption. Thomas, of Gellywernen Coermarthen, descended from Sir Hugh Freherne, one of the Welsh knights who accompanied the Black Prince to the battle of Poitiers. Thomas, of Llyn Madoc, of Brecknock, traces his pedigree up to that prolific source of noble and gentle blood, Elystan Glodrydd, Prince of Fferllys; and Thomas, of Welfield, Radnorshire, springs from the same princely origin."

#### REV. WILLIAM THOMAS.

We will now proceed to give an account of Rev. William Thomas, ancestor of the family under consideration in this history. His contemporaries

more generally preferred to call him "Elder" rather than "Reverend," according to the custom of that day, and as being more Scriptural. The time of his birth was more than two centuries ago, in the reign of the second Charles and in the year 1678. The place of his birth was Llanwenarth, in Monmouthshire, Wales, a county at a distance from the seacoast, and bordering on the confines of England. He appears afterwards to have removed some distance, as before the time of his emigration he was living on a farm called "Blassaw of Wyn," in the Parish of Bedwillyd. His family were not of the poorer or peasant class, but possessed of some means, and were freeholders of an estate of considerable value. Their condition in life also enabled him to secure a superior education compared with the majority of his countrymen emigrating in those times to America. Just the amount of this education we are not informed, but had probably been supplemented by the tastes and proclivities of a sedate and studious youth possessed of an active and vigorous mind, eager to absorb knowledge. During this period he wisely and fortunately acquired the knowledge of a mechanical trade—that of cooper. He was already grown to manhood before the close of that century but did not marry until over thirty years of age. His wife was Ann—. We have no record telling us her maiden name, but it is supposed to have been Griffith. She was but two years his junior, born in 1680, and was destined to cheer her husband's labors and toils for forty years in America. The celebrated Abel Morgan, a Baptist divine of great repute, then already past his prime, was an acquaintance and friend. It appears that Thomas had early in

youth embraced religion and that his good character and his gift as a speaker and exhorter had already secured from his brethren an entrance into the gospel ministry.

After the death of his parents he sold a patrimonial estate of considerable value and prepared to improve his fortunes in a land where liberty and equal laws offered better advantages, and to which Penn's broad invitation was tempting the generous, the hopeful, and the aspiring of all peoples to come and make their abiding home. It was on a wintry day in the beginning of the year 1712, at the age of thirty-four that William Thomas essayed to embark for America in a vessel bound from the city of Bristol. He was doomed to sad loss and disappointment, the particulars of which we will give in the words of Rev. Joseph Mathias. "He, with his wife and first born son, named Thomas (then an infant), left their native country to come to America. He agreed for a passage with a vessel lying at Bristol, bound for Philadelphia. The value of his possessions was such that the prospect bid fair for him to become a land-holder to a large amount in this country, with plenty of cash to enable him to build, stock and improve to advantage. His cash, some valuables, together with all the clothing for himself and family, except what would be necessary for their use for a few days, were all put on board the vessel. The freight was not all on board, nor the passengers all ready, but a day was assigned on which they should sail. In the interim he took his family to the country, intending to return at or before the appointed day. They did return before the time assigned, but found to their great grief that the vessel had set sail, but was not yet

out of sight. Pursuit was made in some small craft, signals was hoisted and kept up, but to no purpose. The vessel was lost sight of, and the family left destitute. They agreed for and took passage on credit in the first vessel bound for Philadelphia, where they arrived safe on the 14th of February, 1712. Upon inquiry, they found the vessel in which their property had been deposited, but the master of the vessel had absconded, the ship was in care and possession of others. They had the mortification to see some of their goods in possession and some of their wearing apparel on the backs of those who had purchased them from the dishonest master of the vessel, yet they were not able to recover anything."

Whether this misfortune, this cruel wrong, was a blessing in disguise or not, it reduced him to poverty, and for a number of years it precluded his becoming a land-holder or actively pursuing the ministry of the Gospel. His pressing need was to get out of debt and gain bread for his family by hard and continuous toil, and fortunately the conditions of life in a new country enabled him to rise and secure a competence, which it would have been scarcely possible to do in the old land. Had not this calamity happened, he would scarcely have settled in Hilltown at all, as at the time of his emigration this portion of Bucks was not open for settlement, and he would have purchased lands elsewhere. Even stripped of his property, he was a valuable emigrant for any new country. Nor was he the kind of man to sit down and unavailingly bewail the inevitable. He possessed a vigorous constitution, good health, a fair education, and the knowledge of a useful handicraft—



qualities that fitted him to cope with the adverse circumstances in which he was thrown, and rise with the growth of the country. His personal character alone was a priceless possession and secured him invaluable help in the time of need. In the old country Thomas had known a family named Watkins, now in America. Becoming apprised of his situation they readily furnished him money to pay his passage, though he had no security to give for repayment, and also for the expense of purchasing material and commencing and carrying on the business of a cedar cooper. In the latter part of 1713 he removed with his family across the Schuylkill into the township of Radnor, now Delaware county, where he pursued his business with industry and success, and where, shortly after, his second son, John, was born. He meanwhile, did not neglect religious duties, but exercised his gifts in preaching, praying and exhorting as he had opportunity. From the rapidity with which he here emerged from his poverty, paying his indebtedness and accumulating money, besides maintaining his family, it is evident that he possessed excellent qualifications for business, was shrewd, saving, energetic and enterprising. He exhibited the same acquiring faculties at a later date in Hilltown, becoming, through industry and good management, what was then considered a wealthy man, though actively engaged in the ministry. The period during which Thomas wrought as a cooper was about five years. It appears that dur-

ing the latter part of this time he had removed to Philadelphia, and is described at the time of his purchase of lands in Hilltown as being of Northern Liberties.

Having acquired sufficient money, and with a growing family of several children around him he determined not to continue a mechanic all his life, but to acquire lands and settle his sons comfortably in life. By this time he had reached middle life and was forty years of age. To the emigrant, either from the isle of Great Britain or from Continental Europe, where the soil was mostly the monopoly of the titled and wealthy, the badge of superiority and power, and which there was no chance for the poor man to acquire, the possession of land was a sweet satisfaction and the dignity of proprietorship very attractive. On coming to America they bought the cheap wild lands, and plenty of it, as fast as their means would allow. Those adjacent to Philadelphia had already been settled for thirty or forty years, and being improved had already so risen in price as to be beyond the means such as Thomas possessed. About this time the progress of settlement had reached the central western parts of Bucks county, from twenty-five to twenty-eight miles from the metropolis. Prominent men in the colony, James Logan, Jeremiah Langhorne, Israel Pemberton, Joseph Kirkbride and others, had begun to divide their great tracts and were ready to sell out to actual settlers.

## CHAPTER II.

THE SETTLEMENT IN HILLTOWN—THE TOWNSHIP OF HILLTOWN—THE LOCATION OF THE SEVERAL TRACTS PURCHASED BY WILLIAM THOMAS—SUBDUING THE WILDERNESS AND THE ERECTION OF DWELLINGS.

The present township of Hilltown, oblong and rectangular in shape, borders upon Montgomery county for four miles, and thence extends six miles toward the northeast, almost half way across the county towards the Delaware. It is one of the largest townships in the county, and also the most populous, containing 3,152 people by the last census. It is a region of rapid alternations of hill and vale, of deep depressions, watered by swift-flowing rivulets, of numerous springs, and soft green meadows. From its high watershed towards the centre, the Neshaminy and Perkiomen both derive their waters, which flow south, east, southwest, west and northwest. Some of the higher plains on the northeast and the elevated region of the centre are of only moderate fertility, but everywhere highly cultivated, whilst the intervening valleys and lower slopes to the southwest and northwest are very fertile and productive. From many situations in the higher lands there is a wealth of splendid prospects, over a far-reaching space, extending in every direction, covering fertile vales, wide-spreading plains, rugged, picturesque hills and the dis-

tant range of the South mountain, through the counties of Lehigh and Bucks. This land of verdant meadows, of fertile slopes, of gushing springs of soft water, of picturesque hills, was very attractive to the early Welsh settlers, reminding them somewhat of their native country, rugged, picturesque, wild Wales.

Jeremiah Langhorne, one of the owners of large tracts of wild land, was the son of a Quaker preacher, a man of mark and note, and who afterwards became Chief Justice of the Province. His residence was in Middletown, where his homestead comprised 800 acres. Of Langhorne, William Thomas made his first purchase. This comprised 440 acres, bought on the 12th of February, 1718, just six years after his arrival in this country. The width of the township along the county line from Line Lexington to Telford is four miles, and this tract sold by Langhorne to Thomas comprised just about one-fourth of this breadth. It began at about where the Neshaminy is crossed by a stone bridge, a mile above Lexington, and thence to near the road leaving the county line below the point where the Bethlehem

turnpike diverges at Reiff's Corner from that boundary. The tract thence extended northeastwardly into the township for just three-fourths of a mile covering a beautiful and fertile valley, and intersected by the Neshaminy and now divided into many productive farms. These are now owned by Jacob Rosenberger, Aaron Brunner, Joseph Wimmer, Elias Roth, Susanna Allebach, Samuel Detwiler, Jacob Hendricks, Abraham Cope, Cornelius Hineley, William Shull, Benjamin Rosenberger and Joseph Detwiler. These are persons of German descent, one and all. The recital of this deed tells that in 1681 William Penn made an indefinite grant of 1,000 acres to an Englishman named John Brock. After the death of the former his right descended to his son, Ralph Brock, who, in 1713, sold his title to Langhorne for £28 for 440 acres. For this area William Thomas paid an advance of £88, or just one dollar of money for each acre of wild land. The boundaries were as follows: "Beginning in the line of Philadelphia county at a corner of Samuel Cart's land; thence north-west by said county line 311 perches; thence northeast 240 perches; thence southeast 311 perches; thence southwest by Samuel Cart's land 240 perches to place of beginning."

William Thomas doubtless took possession that year and commenced improvements. At a later date his dwelling of stone, one and a half stories in height, stood on the meadow bank about one hundred yards southeast of the present house of Samuel Detwiler. This was demolished in 1812, but a depression in the ground yet shows where it stood. Whether this was the house first erected by Thomas is unknown. It

may have been preceded by a temporary building of logs somewhere near the same site, though this is altogether supposition. A spring of soft water, now filled up, formerly gushed forth close to where the dwelling stood. This was a few hundred yards northeast of the county line. The pioneer had already reached forty years, was now in his prime, but his oldest sons were yet but small lads.

Five years' time would suffice to make considerable improvements, to erect buildings, to clear and enclose sufficient ground to afford room for crops needful for the sustenance of man and beast. In 1723 there came an opportunity to purchase additional land, farther up the valley, toward the sources of the Neshaminy, amid the hills of the divide. James Logan, another prominent Colonial magnate, also held large quantities of wild land, some of which was in Hilltown. He was a man of varied tastes and classical learning, the founder of the Loganian Library, and afterwards Chief Justice of the colony. His old time country seat at Stenton may yet be seen near Wayne Junction. His Hilltown lands lay east of the Perkasio Manor of 10,000 acres, and comprised of 2,000 acres, which Israel Pemberton had received from William Penn in 1716. Pemberton conveyed to Logan, September 26, 1723, and two days later the deed to Thomas for 300 acres of it was written.

At that period there was a much wider distinction between classes than now, and Logan moved in a very different rank from the farmer and mechanic. He was rather haughty and pompous, and knew not the rude-looking countryman, clad in coarse, homely garb, who, on his way home from market, whither he had carried pro-



duce on horseback, stopped at "Stenton" to inquire the price of the land. Logan surveyed Thomas at first rather critically, and inquired if he was able to pay for the land if he should buy it. His reply was: "My name is William Thomas. Let me know the price of the land. If that shall meet my approbation I will then refer thee to Mr. Langhorne for any particulars thee may wish to know concerning me." The price £90 was named, and William was invited to call again. Meanwhile Logan had seen Langhorne, who, from former dealings and knowledge of Thomas, gave him a first-class character. At the next interview the change in his demeanor was marked. With a smiling countenance he informed Thomas that Langhorne had said that "if he did not pay for the land he would do so himself."

The tract purchased of Logan in 1723 did not adjoin the 440 acres along the county line, but was a mile and a half northward. It was an oblong piece, lying on the northwest slope of the divide, beginning on its summit and extending for a mile down the valley toward the branch of the Perkiomen. A highway leading from Leidy town to Sellersville now passes through it lengthwise. It was about half a mile in breadth, and contained 300 acres. It now comprises the properties of Levi Thomas, Miss Belinda Thomas, Mararai Gulick, Joseph Landis, A. Klinekauf, A. Weiss, P. Roth, H. Fellman and J. Strouse. It is remarkable that the only persons bearing the Thomas name reside on this tract, owning but small portions of the large landed possessions of the progenitor of the family in Hilltown. The following are the boundaries of this purchase:

"Beginning at a marked hickory standing in Andrew VanBuskirk's land; then northwest 318 perches by John Penn's land; then southwest 160 perches by other part of the 2000 acres; then southeast by other part of the 2000 acres, 318 perches to corner of VanBuskirk's land; then northeast 160 perches to beginning."

For this the sum of £90 was paid. It belonged to a patent for 2000 acres made to Israel Pemberton in 1716. The soil was fair, becoming more fertile down the valley toward the northward, abounding in springs and natural meadows, and otherwise covered with forests.

On this tract the ground was first cleared at two points, and in course of time, probably soon after 1740, stone houses were erected by William for two of his sons, Ephraim and Mannasseh. The dwelling for the first named stood very near the house of Ephraim's great-grandson, Levi Thomas. A forest lies towards the west, between which and the house is a narrow meadow. The spring that guided the selection of this spot for a home flowed forth in the meadow on the premises now belonging to his sister Miss Belinda Thomas. The highway running past the dwelling has only been opened within the past sixty years, which now separates the out-buildings from the dwelling. The stone house built by the pioneer for his son Mannasseh was farther northwest, down the sloping valley on a meadow bank where now stands the dwelling of Joseph Landis. The 300 acres were evenly divided into similar plantations of 150 acres each, and that of Mannasseh's also included P. Roth's farm, farther down the slope towards the branch.

The third purchase in point of time was made December 28, 1725, of a Welshman named Rowland Ellis, and comprised 256 acres. Unlike the others, this purchase, though made at one time comprised two disconnected tracts, one of 150 and the other of 106 acres. Ellis never resided in Hilltown, but in Philadelphia. The boundaries of the first named tract were as follows, beginning at the west corner :

"Beginning at corner of other land of William Thomas; then northeast 52 perches; then southeast by Evan Griffith's 30 perches; then southeast by Benjamin Philips' 171 perches; then southwest 132 perches by other land of William Thomas; and by same 201 perches to beginning."

The farms of Levi Leidy, Henry Knipe, J. F. Fluck and others are now contained within this purchase. In later times the Michael Moyer and Fuhman farms were here comprised. This purchase was part of the patrimony received by the oldest son, Thomas Thomas. The stone house erected for him by his father stood in the meadow where Henry Knipe now lives, or on the old Fuhman property. It was one and a half stories high. The present house is quite ancient but is not believed to be the original one.

These lands lay adjoining the first purchase of 440 acres comprising a more rugged region farther towards the sources of the Neshaminy, diversified by sharp ridges rising towards the northeast, separated by meadows, through which brooks flowed southwestwardly. It also extended north west over and beyond the high ridge along which passes the highway through Fairhill.

The smaller purchase of 106 acres

lay a mile to the eastward on the easterly slope of the ridge rising from the valley of the north branch of the Neshaminy in New Britain, and was near the border line of that township. The larger part of this (76 acres) is now comprised in the farm of Jonas Leidy, together with the lot of four acres, upon which is the Baptist meeting house and graveyard. It was a pleasant little fertile vale, and the side-hill commanded a splendid prospect towards the southeast. Here was its boundaries :

"Beginning at a corner of Andrew VanBuskirk's land running by same northeast 109 perches; then southeast 156 perches; then southwest by John Humphrey's land 109 perches, then 156 perches northwest to beginning."

This was about half a mile long by one-third wide. The VanBuskirks were a family of Holland Dutch, coming from Bergen county, New Jersey, and who did not remain in Hilltown. For the two tracts £56 were paid. Ellis had purchased it of Daniel Wharley, of Philadelphia, in 1724; the latter had received a large grant from William Penn in 1695, part of which was selected in Hilltown afterwards.

The fourth purchase made by Thomas was from James Logan some years later, April 10, 1728. It comprised 212 acres, for which £100 were paid. It was part of the 2,000 acre Pemberton tract. Here are the boundaries :

"Beginning at a corner of tract of which this is a part; then northwest  $169\frac{1}{2}$  perches to corner William Thomas' other land, to Evan Griffith's land; then northeast 200 perches to a corner of James Logan's; then  $169\frac{1}{2}$  perches southeast by William Thomas'

other land ; then southwest 200 perches to beginning.

Evan Griffith was for many years quite a prominent personage in Hilltown, and took part in the organization of the township.

The northwest line of this was on the upper side of the Ridge road running through Fairhill, or Snabeltown. The lower line included the farm of Samuel Detwiler and including also the Francisco and Myers lots on the southwest. This tract covered a lofty summit level, though including some pleasant meadows and grassy dales in the east and south. It became the patrimony of Rev. John Thomas. There is some doubt as to where was the stone house erected for him by his father. Three ancient dwellings are remembered, one on the farm of Jacob Seiple and another stood on the meadow banks near the present dwelling of Samuel Detwiler, one-fourth of a mile east of the village of Fairhill.

There was one other purchase made by William Thomas, the smallest of all. This was 50 acres, bought of Benjamin Philips, on the 30th of April, 1728. It was a strip adjoining the 150 acres, and on the easterly side crossing the Neshaminy. It was long and narrow, the length being three times its breadth. Its boundaries were as follows :

"Beginning at corner of other land of Benjamin Philips' and ex-

tending thence south by land of William Thomas  $52\frac{2}{3}$  perches ; thence east by the same land 152 perches to a corner post ; thence north by land of John Morris  $52\frac{2}{3}$  perches to a corner ; thence west by the said Benjamin Philips' other land 152 perches to beginning."

This was part of the 1100 acres conveyed by Langhorne to Andreas VanBuskirk in 1713. In 1726 the latter conveyed to John VanBuskirk 300 acres. Of this, during the same year, the latter sold to Benjamin Philips 150 acres. The latter retained 100 acres for many years. This little tract then purchased fell to the inheritance of Thomas Thomas along with the 150 bought of Ellis. The small farm of J. F. Fluck of 44 acres is part of it. The homestead of Benjamin Philips was where Samuel Heckler now lives. At the death of Philips his nephew, Henry Harris, obtained it, who in 1762 sold to Peter Bodder, a German. Bodder sold to Andrew Artman in 1793. Philips retained 100 acres of the 150 before purchased of VanBuskirk.

It will be seen that the several purchases of land made by William Thomas were bought from four parties Jeremiah Langhorne, James Logan, Rowland Ellis and Benjamin Philips. In all they comprised 1258 acres, or nearly two square miles, and they cost him £361.

## CHAPTER III.

CAREER OF WILLIAM THOMAS IN HILLTOWN—ERECTION OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH  
—HIS MINISTRY—HIS LAST WILL AND DEATH.

These lands having been secured the career of William Thomas in Hilltown for nearly forty years was henceforth one of untiring industry, and of the laborious toil which accompanied the life of the pioneer. He became a leader among his people and among the most conspicuous citizens of that community. The implements with which man then fought his battle in subduing nature and sought to wrench her gifts from the soil were quite rude and inefficient compared with those which knowledge and inventive skill have now equipped him for similar conflicts. The soil was cleared of timber, rocks and stone with labors made less severe owing to neighborly assistance, men working in large companies. Afterwards seven stone houses were erected for each of his children, five sons and two daughters, Thomas John, Ephriam, Mannasseh, William, Gwently and Anna, giving each a farm as they married. It is said by some that these houses were of log and the barns of stone. Mathias in his history says they were of stone. He possessed the judgment and shrewdness which combined with industry, enable men to acquire and hold property, and in material goods he became a prosperous

and wealthy man for those days; inasmuch as he had money to lend to his more needy neighbors. On record, we find a mortgage of £100 given him in 1743 by Lewis Evans, of Hilltown, and another of £200 in 1748 given him by the same person, also one of £50 by Isaac James, of New Britain.

He did not, however, confine his labors solely to money-getting and increasing his worldly store. He could not forget in the new world in which Providence had so prospered his labors that he was a Christian and a minister of that gospel which in his youth he had preached in his native land. He had the education and gifts fitting him for a leader and instructor, nor did he shrink from the duty, though in the then condition of the settlement he could hope for no pecuniary reward for such spiritual labor. He belonged to the Baptist church at Montgomery, but that was several miles away, and much farther from the homes of most of the Welsh settlers at Hilltown. There was no meeting house in which to gather the people. Such as were members at Montgomery attended there at communion seasons, and never during the life of Mr. Thomas did the Hilltown meeting attain an indepen-



dent existence, but was a branch of Montgomery, merely holding meetings there because more convenient. Neither was Mr. Thomas ever a regularly ordained minister, but in Wales, like other dissenting preachers, he had been licensed by the English government, to hold meetings, preach and authorized to administer the marriage ceremony under the toleration act. It is very probable that at first, in lieu of better accommodations he preached or exhorted at his own or other settlers' houses, and perhaps in the open air in summer weather under the shade of the primeval forest. Such household and open air meetings occurred between 1725 and 1737. Such could only be a temporary expedient. He likewise assisted Mr. Griffith in preaching at Montgomery. The population increased, and also the congregations. Mr. Thomas owned the land and possessed wealth, probably greater than most of his neighbors. So he determined to make them a gift of a piece of land, and erect thereon a house of worship at his own expense. Four acres of side hill, covered with forest was laid off, on the west corner of the 106-acre tract bought of Ellis in 1725. On the northwest side now passes the Bethlehem turnpike, even then termed "ye great road." The original forest yet covers the slope, except in front of the church where the dead lie sleeping, and at the foot of the hill by the road side the spring flows forth as of yore. For beauty of situation it is magnificent, and perhaps this fact appealed to the old patriarch's perception of nature's charms in selecting the site. The prospect displays a wide stretch of glorious landscape, a wide expanse of plain and valley, encircled by hills on the distant eastern horizon.

Bathed in the warm tints of a summer's day, the landscape, flecked by the fleeting shadows born of the changeable beauty of the passing cloud, is one very fair to look upon, and well worthy of the painter's canvas. The Neshaminy and its branches wind through the valley below, and in the distance, crowning its elevated site may be discerned the spires and domes of the county seat of Bucks.

Here he erected a stone meeting house in the year 1737. Some claim that this was of logs. Although the congregation probably assisted him, Mr. Thomas himself wrought in finishing the interior of the building, which, however, was small and rude, compared to modern church edifices. He made the pulpit out of a hollow gum tree, which was laid on a platform. This church stood for forty-four years, but was demolished in 1771, and a stone church of more enlarged proportions erected in its stead.

At the time of the completion of this building Elder Thomas was already fifty-nine years of age, yet he preached for many years to increasing throngs of hearers, as the country grew more thickly settled, and the children of the pioneers became men and women. Towards the close of his life another church was erected three miles northeast, now known as the "upper end." An acre of ground was here given by John Kelly in 1750. Mr. Thomas may have preached here some, but then he was already quite an aged man, and his son John had entered the ministry, who more and more occupied his place as increasing infirmities impaired his father's strength. With the history of Hilltown church the Thomas family, father and son, were intimately asso-

cited for over half a century as its spiritual guides, while other sons were ruling elders and prominent members. Within the sunny graveyard adjoining, devised to his flock, overlooking the vale beneath, Elder Thomas, his wife and all his seven children were buried. The second church remained standing till 1858, when it was succeeded by the present one of brick, in which a congregation, not very large, gather as of yore.

Tradition relates that to the original stone church the people went armed with their guns in time of alarm from hostile Indians, and stacked their weapons of defense at the door of the church, prepared to defend themselves with carnal weapons whilst they listened to spiritual truths. Their preacher had some knowledge of military tactics, and understood the discipline of a soldier better than any of his hearers. In times of the most threatening danger he carried with him his arms of defense even to the base of the pulpit, where, before he ascended, he deposited his ammunition, his gun and his sword. This was doubtless during the period of the old French and Indian wars, when the savages were making alarming forays across the Blue mountains, carrying devastation and slaughter through Berks and Northampton counties.

Tradition relates other tales, doubtless true, concerning the power of "Divination," or of foretelling future events, ascribed to Elder Thomas. It was an age of credulity and superstition, arising from greater popular ignorance than now prevails. Although this power was said to be something capable of being imparted to others by means of the observance of certain rules, as are the arts of a common for-

tune-teller, we are impelled to credit it to another cause, not at all miraculous, though quite unusual. Some natures are gifted with a finer spiritual insight than the mass, and at certain times of mental exaltation are enabled to peer farther into the future than the ken of common mortals. It is related that in his declining years Elder Thomas showed this gift in foretelling accurately the future of his family. Like Jacob of old, his children's future lives passed before his mind's eye in vision, their personal behavior, their fortunes and their end. Once when his daughter Anna lay very sick with a fever, whilst yet a maiden, her father entered her room and told her that she would recover from her present illness. That later in life Stephen Rowland should seek her in marriage, that him she would marry, but a year after she would die in childbirth. This proved true, though she then had no thought of her future husband. Of his sons he said that all but one would prove good, Christian men, and one would become a preacher. One would go astray and do no good, and then come to his end prematurely by violence—all of which the future confirmed, years after their father's death.

Nothing comes down to us concerning the personality of his wife Ann. She walked by his side for forty years after their arrival in America, and preceded him five years to the tomb. Her death took place November 5, 1752, at the age of 72. But old age came on at length. His span of life had been lengthened out nearly to four-score years, forty-five of which had been passed in America since he landed a penniless stranger. He had acquired large landed possessions and saw his children settled comfortably

around him. He had done much in impressing himself for good upon the rising generation by the example of an upright life and as an earnest preacher of the Gospel. He had founded a Christian church, which has ever existed as a memorial of his liberality and his labors, and for nearly a century and a half has shed its light upon successive generations of the descendants of his countrymen. Upon an autumnal day, the 6th of October, 1757, the hand of death was laid upon him at the age of 79. No record mentions his funeral, but doubtless a few days later a large congregation attended the interment of his remains. The place of his burial is yet attested by a large, flat marble stone, inscribed with his name, age and epitaph. The latter is singularly appropriate and quite unique, and though often quoted by local writers, cannot be omitted here :

"In yonder meeting-house I spent my breath,  
Now silent, mouldering here, I lie in death ;  
These silent lips shall wake, and yet declare  
A dread amen to truths they published there."

There is reason to believe that it was original with himself. There is none like it in this part of the country, and among all the quaint epitaphs recorded in English graveyards, we have read of none similar. It is obvious that it could not be common, inasmuch as it would not be appropriate except for a minister of the Gospel. In its lines we perceive the orthodox Calvinist, and the stern warning concerning future punishment pertaining to that creed. He had done his duty, and the careless hearer must answer to a stern Judge how they had heeded the message of God's ambassador.

Concerning the personal appearance and mental traits of William Thomas, the ancestor of so many descendants,

tradition preserves only a few memorials. We are told that he was able-bodied, a short, thick-set, "chunky" man, of dark hair, eyes and complexion, rather bony and spare than fleshy, and sharp-spoken or sententious in his speech. He probably had the motive-mental temperament, which accompanies a disposition to physical action and also to mental labor, apt to belong to minds more solid than brilliant. His physical and mental traits, as well as complexion, were transmitted to a large number of his descendants. Rev. Joseph Mathias says that he possessed an easy address, possessed a strong, discriminating and vigorous mind, and had a fair education in both Welsh and English. In Wales he was accustomed to preach in either language alternately, or as his hearers demanded.

His last testament was written by Rev. Benjamin Griffith, of Montgomery, his pastor and brother in the ministry, on the 11th of December, 1753. Concerning his children its purport was as follows :

1st. To daughter Gwentlian Morris, all that tract of land adjoining the meeting house, containing 100 acres, to be her's during life, but after her death it descended to Cadwallader Morris, her eldest son.

2d. To son Ephraim, 150 acres, part of 300 bought of Logan.

3d. To son Mannasseh, the other 150 acres, part of said 300.

4th. To son John, a tract which he bought of James Logan, "where my son John now lives," adjoining the 300 above mentioned. This contained 200 acres.

5th. To son Thomas, "the tract where he now lives," which I bought of Rowland Ellis, consisting of 150

acres; also the 50 acres I bought of Benjamin Phillips.

Also, to Thomas, 50 acres out of the tract I bought of Langhorne, 50 perches in breadth, beginning at corner of Evan Griffith's land, then along the line between me and Griffith 35 perches, then along a line parallel to the land aforesaid, devised to Thomas Thomas until it meets the land hereafter devised to my daughter Anna. He speaks of a particular field, called "the long field."

6th. To daughter Anna, during her lifetime, part of the tract I bought of Langhorne, comprising 100 acres; but at her death to go to her brother William.

7th. To son William, the remainder of the 440 acres, "where I now live." All his sons were made joint executors, together with Evan Griffith and his brother-in-law, Lewis Evans, of Hilltown. Evan Evans, of Gwynedd, and John Jones, carpenter, of Montgomery, were made trustees to see to the proper execution of this will.

It will be observed that in respect to his daughters this will was characterized by the old prejudice in favor of keeping all the land in the hands of the male descendants. Most wills of that time merely give the daughters small legacies and all the land to the sons or male heirs. In this case they got some land, but only held a life-right therein. That portion of his will relating to the Baptist meeting has often been quoted, being of public importance and relating to interests outside of his own family. In this will it is shown that the testator was not unaware of the advantages and need of secular education to the community. Its provisions in this respect

were the more valuable, as it was in behalf of a community destitute of all save the scanty advantages of such pay schools as might or might not be opened in the absence of a public school system, which the State neglected for eighty years afterwards. This school, adjacent to the church, was kept up till modern times. In other respects we see the sturdy sectarian spirit, characteristic of his day, and the hostility towards Catholicism inherited from the days of the Reformation in the old country. Just why he bore such a dislike and dread of the Moravians it is difficult to discern, inasmuch as now they are not regarded very differently from other Protestant sects. Perhaps it was from lack of knowledge concerning them. Happily neither Catholics nor Moravians have ever had the least desire to preach in said meeting house, nor probably were even aware they were interdicted. No heterodoxy or schism, however plausible, should raise its head here, but however it should be tested or detected does not appear. It is evident that all future incumbents of this pulpit must be careful not to imbibe or express views savoring of "new" or "reformed theologies," or the will of old William Thomas will sternly rise up to question the soundness of his faith. This is what the will says:

"I give and bequeath unto the inhabitants of Hilltown, forever, the meeting house erected by myself, together with the graveyard in which to bury their dead, and all others, far and near, black and white. Such as are guilty of self-murder I only reject and deny to be buried in my graveyard or in any part of my land. I give liberty to the said inhabitants to enlarge the said graveyard as much as occasion



may demand, the same to be laid out and bounded in the following manner: To begin at Henry Lewis' corner post, thence southeast somewhat farther than the spring or well which belongeth already to the said meeting house 35 perches; thence northeast 20 perches; thence northwest 35 perches to a white oak sapling by the great road; thence along the said road southwest 20 perches to beginning, containing by estimation four acres of land and some perches. I forbid any timber to be cut on said lot for any use save to repair said meeting house, grave yard, etc. The said meeting house and lot of land as before described I give unto the inhabitants of said township forever to bury their dead in, and to school their children (I also allow others to send to school there) and to perform Christian worship but under the foregoing and following directions and restrictions, viz: I allow all tolerated ministers to preach funeral sermons either in the graveyard or meeting house, which they may like best. Papists and heretics I reject and altogether deny them any grant. My will is that the Baptists hold religious meetings in the said house as often as they can; but not any one that deny the Nicene creed. I allow the Presbyterians to

preach in the said house, provided they hold the Westminster confession of faith, likewise Independents. But if it happens that any one of them will not swear allegiance to a Protestant king, such I deny and disallow altogether. Papists nor Moravians I allow not to preach in said house, nor any other strangers let them appear ever so godly until they are well known to be sound in the faith. My will is that catechising children shall be kept up in the said meeting house forever by orthodox catechism, and in order that my will therein may be observed, I do constitute and depute my five sons, Thomas, John, Ephriam, Manasseh and William, to assist and take proper care therein. I appoint Lewis Evans, junior, Nathaniel Griffith, eldest son of Evan Griffith, and Jonathan Evans, all of the township aforesaid, and further I direct and order them, and every one of them in their wills to depute some honest religious man in the room of each of them to answer the care and trust I have reposed in them."

Having finished the record of the life of William Thomas at length, we shall make mention of each of his children in their order, and give some account of their posterity.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THOMAS THOMAS—THE LANDS HE HELD—HIS MARRIAGE, LAST WILL AND DEATH.

The seven children of Rev. William Thomas were born between the years 1711 and 1723. As before mentioned, the first-born, Thomas, was born in Wales, and was an infant at the time of his parents' emigration to America. The date of his birth therefore was about 1711. Personally, of the children of William Thomas, we know much less than of their father, consequently the account of them will be more brief. It was not an uncommon Welsh custom to give a son his father's surname for his own first name, such as William Williams, John Johns, Jenken Jenkins and as in this case. Of his personal appearance, it is said he grew up tall, large, and fine-looking, whilst all his brothers resembled their father in being much shorter in stature. In his youth was the era of the first settlement of the country, new emigrants were coming in, the rudeness of nature had to be conquered by the scattered pioneers, and he doubtless was a valuable assistant of his father in subduing the wilderness. The educational advantages of that period were quite scanty, and in many cases the second generation of people were inferior in knowledge to that of their parents, and a large amount of illiteracy prevailed before the Revolution. As was the case with his brothers, he was a

member of Montgomery church, and attended Hilltown meeting. He was twice married, the first time about 1735, and the name of this wife was Margaret Bates, a sister of Thomas Bates, of Montgomery. The Bates were a Welsh family, who were among the earliest settlers of the township, and held lands between Montgomeryville and Lansdale, along the Hatfield border. This wife died, we may presume, previous to 1750. She had three children, Morgan, Ann and Alice. The second wife was Mary Williams, by whom he had ten children, viz: Elizabeth, Esther, Job, Amos, Jonah, Catharine, Asa, Sarah, Abel and Anna. Thomas Thomas became a larger landholder in Hilltown than any of his brothers, save Ephraim, inasmuch as he not only received a large inheritance, but had previously made extensive purchases in the western part of that township. In all he purchased 579 acres, which added to the 250 received from his father made 829 acres altogether, 100 of which, however, he immediately sold to his brother Manasseh, and 100 to his brother John. His first purchase was made in 1735, whilst yet a young man of twenty-four. This consisted of a small piece of 79 acres, bought of Richard and Thomas Penn. It was an oblong rectangle in shape,

184 perches in length from northeast to southwest, and 100 perches in breadth, bounded by lands of William Thomas, James Lewis and the widow Lewis. It is difficult at this time to give the exact location of this tract, though it was adjacent to lands afterwards possessed by his son Asa, and touched the banks of the Neshaminy.

Fifteen years later, after he had reached middle life, and been married a second time, he bought quite a large plantation of 500 acres. This was part of the Pemberton and Logan tracts of 2000 acres, of which the Thomas family bought just half, at different times. James Logan had devised it to his daughter Hannah, wife of John Smith. Its situation was northwest of Fairhill, and on the northerly slope which declines towards the Branch, and comprised quite fertile land. This region is now divided into many farms, including those of Valentine Rickert, John Derstine, Abraham Shelly and perhaps others. Of these 500 acres he almost immediately sold 100 to his brother Manasseh and also a tract of 100 acres to his brother John.

Many of the more wealthy landholders in the days previous to the Revolution owned slaves, though there were not many in Hilltown. Thomas Thomas was one of these, and tradition says he had them working on this upper farm, north of Fairhill. By his father's will he received 250 acres, including the 150 acres bought of Rowland Ellis, together with 50 added on the west side from the 440 acre tract, and the 50 acres on the east, bought of Benjamin Phillips. This although willed to him, he had paid £60 for to his father a short time before his death. It included the present farms of Henry Knipe, Levi Leidy,

Jacob Shinlever, J. Heckler and others, comprising all the lands of the old Furhman and Michael Moyer estates.

It may be interesting to know the place of his residence, which certainly was on this property. This was near the site of the dwelling of Henry Knipe, where his father had erected a log house for him, probably previous to 1740, and a stone barn. Afterwards, about or before the Revolution, Thomas Thomas erected a log house on the meadow bank in front of Levi Leidy's, near the banks of the Neshaminy. His son Asa built a stone addition to this and in which he afterwards lived. It was about 30 by 20 feet in dimensions, and finally demolished since 1840.

He doubtless had other houses on his other tract over the hill to the northwest, but it is certain he lived here both in 1757 and at the time of writing his will in 1778. The purport of this will was as follows:

To my wife, Mary, all lands and tenements I possess in Hilltown, which are divided into lots 2, 3 and 4; also £150.

To daughter Ann, wife of John Custard, £40.

To daughter Alice, wife of John Mathias, £10.

To daughter Catharine, wife of Charles Miller, a lot of land bounded by lands of Jacob Cope, William Thomas and Jonah Thomas.

To son Asa all his patented lands adjoining lands of Jacob Cope and Henry Lewis and also lot No. 2, being the same whereon I now reside, bounded by lands of Jonah Thomas, who possesses lot No. 1, containing 30 acres. The patented land contained 104 acres.

To son Abel 50 acres; also 20 ad-

joining, being lot No. 3, bounded by lands of Peter Bother (Bodder) and John Thomas; also a trowel and mason hammer. The last bequest indicates that Thomas Thomas may have been a mason as well as a farmer.

He did not arrive within ten years of the age of his father, or to be as old as two of his brothers. His death took place in January, 1780, at the age of 69. Though buried in Hilltown no legible memorial stone marks the spot.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE CHILDREN AND DESCENDANTS OF THOMAS THOMAS.

We will next mention the children of Thomas Thomas separately and trace his posterity for a few generations. Concerning many branches of his descendants this has not been feasible to accomplish, owing to their removal to a distance, to lack of knowledge, etc. Such information as the writer has concerning them will be found in the following pages. Inasmuch as Thomas Thomas had so many children, so also his posterity were very numerous, and are scattered far and wide into many portions of the country.

The three children by his first wife, Margaret Bates, were Morgan, Ann and Alice.

## MORGAN THOMAS.

Morgan was born about 1736, and was never married. He removed to New Jersey and there died.

## ANN CUSTARD.

Ann married John Custard. His family, we believe, belonged in Towamencin, and were probably of German origin. Ann was married a second time, next to Jacob Appenzeller, but by whom she had no children. A curious tradition is told of her first husband. During the Revolution she one night had a vivid dream, in which she thought she had a valuable black silk

handkerchief which three crows came and carried off. Not long after that three British soldiers came and persuaded her husband to go along with them, and whom she never saw again. They probably lived in Montgomery county at that time.

Morgan Custard, her eldest son, married Adah Thomas, daughter of Job Thomas, who was a son of Thomas Thomas, and therefore her cousin. He died June 30, 1827, and left two children, John and Mary. Of these John removed to Slatington, married and has descendants. Mary married Samuel Lay, living near Quakertown.

## ALICE MATHIAS.

Alice Thomas, born in 1746, married John Mathias, son of John Mathias, Sr., who came to America in 1722, and founded the family of that name in Hilltown. The former was a carpenter by trade. Their children were ten in number, viz: Thomas, Enoch, Griffith, Morgan, Elizabeth, Gainer, Margaret, Mary, Sarah and Alice. From these have sprang numerous descendants. Their father died September 8th, 1813, aged 80 years; whilst their mother died October 25th, 1810, aged 74. Of their children, Griffith was killed in a storm by the falling of a tree in his eighteenth year. Margaret was *non compos mentis*, and Morgan,



Elizabeth and Alice were never married.

Thomas married Margaret Rowland, daughter of Stephen Rowland, and had five children, Rowland, Thezah, William, James and Mary. The father of these died January 10th, 1806. Three of his children died young. Rowland Mathias married Mary, daughter of Ashbel Jones, and had a family. Mary Mathias married Ira Jones, who for many years has resided at Roxborough.

Enoch Mathias, born 1772, married Anna Fulton, daughter of James and Mary Fulton. Enoch died June 2d, 1856, aged 84; his wife died September 2d, 1846, in her sixty-ninth year. They had two children, Charles and Elizabeth. Charles died a young man. Elizabeth married Jesse Armstrong, of Bedminster, and had two children, Anna Maria, now wife of Dr. A. J. Hines, of Doylestown, and Enoch, who married Mattie, daughter of ex-Sheriff James M. Wilkinson.

Gainer Mathias was twice married. Her first husband was Thomas Mathias, brother of Rev. Joseph Mathias. He dying, she then married Abel H. James, by neither of whom had she children. Her death took place September 20th, 1822.

Mary Mathias married a shoemaker named Griffith Jones. She died in 1833. Her husband possessed a tract of land. Had children—Eliza, Joseph and Alice. She was a member of Hilltown. Mathias says that, though not a member, her husband was very useful in the secular concerns of the church of which he was one of the trustees for many years.

Sarah Mathias married William H. Rowland, a storekeeper in the village of Dublin and at one time a member

of the Legislature. Had children—Matilda, Newton and Justus. Of these, Matilda was not married. Justus married Letitia Darrah, daughter of Mark Darrah, and Newton married Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Joseph Mathias, and until recently lived on the ancestral homestead of his father-in-law,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Dublin. Had children—Asenath, Melvina, Sarah, Matilda and Emily.

We will next return to the children of Thomas Thomas by his second wife, Mary Williams. They were ten in number, viz: Elizabeth, Esther, Job, Amos, Jonah, Catharine, Asa, Sarah, Abel and Anna.

#### ELIZABETH GODSHALK.

Elizabeth married Henry Godshalk. They both belonged to Montgomery Baptist church, into which they were received on the 20th of September, 1769. At that time his was the only German or Dutch name on that church book. They had several children, of whom Mary married Walter, son of Elias Thomas. The latter had five children, and removed to Indiana. Amos, a son of Walter Thomas, taught school in Hilltown about 1821, when a young man. He afterwards removed West along with his father.

#### ESTHER WILLIAMS.

Esther Thomas, who married William Williams; so says Mathias, but says nothing further of her family, nor can we find any verification of the fact or knowledge of her existence from the later descendants of the family.

#### JOB THOMAS.

Job Thomas was born about 1751; married Rebecca Bates, daughter of Thomas and Sarah Bates, by whom he had eight children. The Revolutionary war broke out about the time

he grew to manhood. Although two of his brothers served as soldiers in the American army, Job was unbelieving in the success of the cause of Freedom, and opposed his brothers enlisting in the service, thinking the British were sure to be successful. "Then," he told his brother Asa, "they will come and take all our property." The latter replied that their property would be worth little to them after the people lost their liberties, and preferred taking the risk of fighting the enemy. In 1775 he received from his father a fine plantation of 200 acres, taken from the upper purchase made by the latter of John Smith in 1750. In 1792 and 1793 he sold this to two Germans, Frederick Fluck and Henry Musselman, and thus another portion of the landed property of the early Welsh settlers passed into the hands of people of another race and religious persuasion. He had become dissatisfied with Hilltown, and removed to the rich Buffalo Valley in 1793, then comprised in Northumberland county, now Union, with part of his family only. Some years after, he removed to Shamokin, and was killed by the falling of a tree, in June, 1798, whilst yet in middle life. His widow removed back to Hilltown and there died, January 30, 1819. His children were Thomas, Abiah, Ruth, Adah, Zillah, Sarah, Mary and Ann. Thomas married Mary Mathias, daughter of Benjamin, and granddaughter of Evan Mathias, and had sons John and Jesse. John married Mary Pool and was a pump maker, living in Montgomery. He had a sister Eliza, who married Charles Humphrey, who had children, Sarah and Jackson Humphrey. Ann married ——— Shewell and removed

West, and Rebecca, who married John Evans, of Montgomery.

Abiah, the second son of Job Thomas, married a Miss Bates, and lived in Montgomery township, that county. He had two sons, Alfred and Hiram. The latter now resides in Norristown. Both married. Alfred died in Philadelphia in 1882. Hiram had children Oliver and Robert. He married Prudence Roberts.

Ruth remained unmarried, living with her aunts Margaret and Hannah.

Adah married Morgan Custard, as afore mentioned.

Zillah married Eber Thomas, son of Mannasseh, and had children: Eli, Enos, Alice, Ann, Lydia and Sarah, an account of whom will be given in the notice of Eber Thomas.

Sarah married Richard Heacock. She died October 8, 1800.

Mary married Owen Rowland, son of Stephen Rowland, as his second wife, and had one son, the well-known Artemas T. Rowland, who owned a farm on the Bethlehem road in Hilltown, north of Mt. Pleasant. He married Martha Raile, and had family, viz.: John, Mary Elizabeth, Lydia, Ann, Anna, Juliet, Martha, Emma and Sarah.

Ann married Issachar Thomas, son of Elias, and grandson of Ephraim Thomas. Had children: Levi, Maria, Rebecca and Melinda. The first and the last are now living on the ancestral property of their progenitor, Ephraim Thomas, in Hilltown. None of the daughters were married, and Mary and Rebecca died in 1878. Levi Thomas married Belinda Lunn.

#### AMOS THOMAS.

Amos Thomas married Ruth Bates, a sister to the wife of Job. They were constituent members of the Hilltown

church at its organization in 1781. He must have been born as early as 1752 or '53, as his name appears as one of the taxables of Hilltown in 1774. He is not mentioned in his father's will. He removed to the neighborhood of Taneytown, Maryland, in 1787, where he died. He was an ardent patriot and served as a captain in the American army during the Revolution. It is related that once when with two of his men he was out on a scouting expedition he came near being captured. The names of his companions were William Miller and — Long, the latter from Bedminster. They were on foot, and were pursued by three British horsemen. Amos turned and fired at them, but missed. Miller then fired and missed also, when Long had better fortune and shot the middle horseman. His two companions then desisted from the pursuit, holding up their dead comrade as they turned their horses in the opposite direction.

#### JONAH THOMAS.

Jonah Thomas was younger than Job or Amos, as his name does not appear on the list of taxables for 1774. The date of his birth was probably about 1754. He married Sarah Freeman, daughter of Richard Freeman. The Freemans were not an original family in Hilltown, but only resided there for ten years, on the premises afterwards owned by Elishu Lunn, but were not there at the beginning of the Revolution. Richard Freeman appears to have despised the soil of Hilltown, some of which was doubtless poor enough in those days. He purchased a tract of richer limestone land in the Saucon Valley, Lehigh county, whither he removed, and the flourishing borough of Freemansburg, on the Lehigh, derives its name from his

family. There he grew rich, and used afterwards rather profanely to say that "God Almighty ought to lengthen out his days ten years to make amends for the time he spent on such a poor property in Hilltown." Jonah Thomas is not mentioned in his father's will, inasmuch as he had already been put in possession of a plantation in 1776, indicating that he was then of age. This contained 150 acres, the larger part of the ancestral homestead that his grandfather had granted to his father in his will of 1753. On it was the old house, built for Thomas Thomas, on or near the site of the present house of Henry Knipe. The barn is remembered to have remained standing as late as 1820, but the present house may have been built by Jonah after receiving possession, as it is quite ancient. The present farm contains only 55 acres of this tract, the remainder being owned by different parties. In 1785, nine years later, Jonah Thomas sold 139 acres of it to a German named John Regale (Reigle). It was then bounded by lands formerly of John Thomas, then Thomas Humphrey, Joseph Lunn, Abiah Miller, formerly Evan Griffith, the heirs of Charles Liedy, Isaac Freeman, William Thomas, Jr., Charles Miller and Asa Thomas. Regale sold it to another German, Michael Moyer, of Hatfield, in 1791, whose daughter Hannah married Henry Fuhman, to whom it descended in 1818, and in the Fuhman family it remained till 1865. An old house on the northern part of the old Moyer tract, in the valley south of Fairhill, is said to have been built by him for his son John. Jonah Thomas afterwards probably lived on a small lot, part of his inheritance.

He is represented as being a man of good natural abilities, witty and jocu-



lar in speech, but given to drinking. Mathias says: "He had a handsome property left him, but through intemperance he soon ran through his estate and died." By this we judge that his death took place whilst yet a young man. Intemperance was the bane of the rural regions in those days, an evil very widely prevalent, and the third and fourth generation of the Thomas family did their share in participating in it, by means of which estates and fortunes passed from their hands. The children of Jonah were Freeman and others. Freeman Thomas married a Miss Currie, living near Freemansburg, and afterwards removed up to the Shawnee Flats, near Wilkesbarre. His daughter Elizabeth married Jonathan Lynn, son of Dr. Lynn, had several children, and died about 1830. Her sister Rebecca remained single.

Catharine Thomas was born about 1756. She married Charles Miller, a native of Ireland, and had a large family of children, not less than eleven in number. Their names were Thomas, William, Abel, Amos, James, Mannasseh, John, Nancy, Mary, Sarah and Catharine. William Shull now owns the property she inherited from her father. Charles Miller died March 27th, 1827, and his widow survived him. His name appears on the list of taxables in Hilltown in 1774, so that his age was probably three-quarters of a century. Soon after his marriage he removed to Northampton county, near the Blue Mountains, upon land he had purchased there, and his children settled around him. They married into the families of the Copes, Laba<sup>m</sup>, Juka Huston and others. Nancy married Charles Laba<sup>m</sup>.

#### ASA THOMAS.

Asa Thomas was born in February,

1858. Concerning him much more is known than of some other of the children of Thomas Thomas, inasmuch as he remained living till old age on the ancestral property. He was born and reared on the Fuhman property in the original house built by his grandfather for his father. After his marriage he lived in the log and stone house that stood on the banks of the Neshaminy in front of the present residence of Levi Leidy. He closed his days in the log house, now belonging to Jacob Shinlever, which was erected about 1809, and which he built for his eldest son Josiah. He was a stone mason by trade, and also a shoemaker. In personal appearance was of short stature, quite broad shoulders, of light brown hair, blue eyes and florid complexion. He served as a private soldier in the American army for a considerable time previous to his majority, but had probably gained a knowledge of his trade before enlisting, and may have learned the same of his father. He was in his twentieth year when he was in the battle of Brandywine, September, 1777, but was not at Germantown. In the former contest he was one of those employed in guarding the fords of the Brandywine creek. It is related that whilst thus engaged that the order had been given for every man to get behind a tree, Indian fashion. They did so, but soon an officer appeared, who ordered them back to their posts. In the retreat, being very thirsty, he was fain to stop at a tavern by the highway, but thought the enemy would be apt to search for fugitives there. So he passed on to a private house, rested a few minutes and got some refreshments. Looking back he saw the British entering the inn, and his host, who

was a Quaker, warned him that he had better escape quickly, and creep behind a hedge which he showed him in the rear of the dwelling. He did so, and thus retained his liberty.

At the close of the Revolution, or about 1783, he married Martha, daughter of Abel James and Mary Howell. She was the granddaughter of William and Mary James, who had come from Wales and had settled on Pine Run, in New Britain, about 1725. Asa had twelve children, nine of whom grew to maturity, viz.: Josiah, Abel, Margaret, Esther, Martha, Elizabeth, Asa, James and Catharine. By his father's will he inherited a tract of 84 acres, now possessed by Levi Leidy, Jacob Shinlever and others. He retained the greater part of this all his life. In 1786 he purchased 36 acres of the 50 that his brother Abel had inherited. It appeared by the wording of his father's will that the latter at that time lived on this tract. If so, it was in the old house on the Leidy farm. During his active life, he worked both at farming and at masonry. He died in his eighty-second year, May 8th, 1839, and was buried at Hilltown. His wife survived him for fifteen years, dying at the house of her daughter, Margaret Hendricks, at Castle Valley, Doylestown township, April 14, 1854, in the 89th year of her age.

Aside from the eleven children above mentioned, there were two sons named Thomas, in succession, who died young. Josiah, the eldest son, was born April 13, 1784. He married Elizabeth Hoffman, daughter of John Hoffman. He was a carpenter by trade, and lived in various places, first in the log house, yet standing. In the latter part of his life he bought a small farm on the height of land a mile

south of the old homestead and now possessed by Adam Smith. He died August 20, 1856, at the age of seventy-two. His wife died November 6, 1855, at the age of sixty-nine. His children were Silas, John, Martha, Joel, Mahlon, Oliver, Elizabeth and Mary. Of these, Silas, born 1811, was a school teacher living in and teaching in Warrington, Gwynedd, Plymouth, White-marsh and other places in Bucks and Montgomery counties; removed to Philadelphia in 1860, and yet resides there. He married Harriet Height, and had children Dr. John S., William, Silas H., Lizzie and Mary, the latter married to Samuel Spanogle.

John S. Thomas was three times married, the third time to Margaret Murphy. His children were Levi, Maria, Martha, Olivia, Caroline, marrying Charles Taylor, Enos Stover and George Altemus. Mahlon and Oliver, the youngest, were not married, nor Mary. Elizabeth married John Holt, Joel married Catharine Herr, Martha married David E. Riale, son of Evan Riale. She died March 15, 1881, in her sixty-eighth year. Oliver, the youngest, born about 1830, served in the Union army in the War of the Rebellion. He was a mason and brick-layer by trade, but at the period of the war's outbreak he was working in Richmond, Virginia, in the Tredegar Iron Works. The Confederate government, seizing the works, the hands were employed in casting shot and shell, and at first were exempted from the sweeping drafts that drew all able-bodied men into the army. He was a brave and resolute man, stoutly maintained his sympathies for the North, and one day seeing a squad of Northern prisoners, who were marched through the city in a half starved con-

dition, he bought a quantity of bread from a bakery, and, cutting the loaves in slices, fed the famished soldiers as they passed by. As a punishment for this he was next morning cast into prison. Afterwards released, he resumed work at the foundry. Soon the exemption of its employes was withdrawn, and rather than serve in the Rebel army he planned means of escape. He was well acquainted with a British subject, a Welshman, also named Thomas. Confiding his plans to him, the latter gave him his pass, by means of which he was enabled to escape to Philadelphia. He then entered the Union army, wherein he served as a lieutenant and captain. He contracted consumption in the army, from which he finally died after the close of the war, in Nebraska.

Abel Thomas was born July 3, 1799. His trade was that of a blacksmith, and in pursuing which he lived at various places in Bucks and Montgomery counties. He married Mary Craig. Previous to 1840 he lived at where is now the village of Pennlyn, just south of the present station. In 1838 he was chosen by the Democratic party one of the Commissioners of that county. He afterwards removed to Doylestown township, and there joined the New Britain Baptist church. His death took place at the house of his son-in-law, John Lampen, in Delaware county, July 8, 1883. His children were Albert, born March 25th, 1824; Allen, born January 20th, 1827; Asher, born April 25th, 1829; Ann Elizabeth, born June 8th, 1831; Ashbel C., born January 9th, 1834; Charles B., born April 17th, 1836; Abel, born August 7th, 1839. Three of these have died—Asher, August 7th, 1830; Charles, October 14th, 1863; Albert, November 24th,

1877. Abel Thomas, the grandfather of the publisher of this historical sketch, was commissioned by Governor George Wolf, May 2d, 1830, First Lieutenant of the "Independent Blues," a volunteer infantry corps of the First Battalion of Volunteers of the Militia of Pennsylvania, in the Second Brigade of the Second Division, composed of the militia of the counties of Bucks and Montgomery. On August 27th, 1836, he was commissioned by Governor Joseph Ritner, Major of the First Lehigh Battalion Montgomery Volunteers, Militia of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Second Brigade, Second Division of the counties of Bucks and Montgomery. On May 12th, 1838, Governor Ritner commissioned him captain of Lafayette Blues, attached to the centre of Union Battalion, Militia of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, First Brigade, Second Division of the counties of Bucks and Montgomery. On August 3d, 1835, Governor Wolf commissioned him captain of the "Union Rangers," attached to the First Battalion Montgomery County Volunteers, Second Brigade, Second Division Militia of the counties of Bucks and Montgomery, April 27th, 1839, Governor Porter commissioned him colonel of the Ninety-Second Regiment, Second Brigade, Second Division Militia of the counties of Bucks and Montgomery.

Margaret Thomas was born in January, 1797. She married Charles Hendricks, son of Jacob Hendricks, in 1817. The wife of Jacob Hendricks was Margaret, daughter of Howell Griffith. Hendricks was a blacksmith and at different times lived in Hilltown, Hatfield and New Britain. He died at Iron Hill, near the latter place,

of a fever, October 31st, 1844, in his fiftieth year. His widow survived him till July 30, 1883, dying in New Galena at the house of her youngest son, Benjamin. Their children were Thomas, Albert G., Martha, Oliver P., Samuel A., Benjamin J. and Elizabeth, born between 1818 and 1839. All survive except Samuel, who died at Princeton, Illinois, in 1870.

Elizabeth Thomas, born 1788, married Isaac Miller, a native of Virginia, who died October 11, 1828, and by whom she had one son, Thomas Miller, now living in North Wales. She afterwards married Eleazar Bitting, and died at New Britain April 3, 1862. Thomas Miller married Susannah Acor, and had three children: Laura, John and William.

Martha Thomas, born January 27, 1795, married Henry Hohlbein, of New Britain. She died May 23, 1868. Had children—John, James, Elvira, Eliza, Mary and Susannah.

James Thomas was born May, 1811. Never married. He was a mason, and died when a young man of pneumonia after a brief illness, about 1840.

Asa Thomas, was born August 17th, 1809. He married Ann, daughter of Benjamin Kulp, of Gwynedd. He died in Lansdale March 25, 1884, aged 75 years. Had children—Asa, Franklin, Margaret, Annie, Mary, Ellen. Asa, junior, lives in North Wales. He married Tillie Hergesheimer.

Esther Thomas died unmarried when a young woman of yellow fever in August, 1810.

Catharine Thomas, born 1807, married Samuel Kentner, and lived in Warrington. Had children—Benjamin, Judson, Samuel, Louisa and Elvira. Louisa married Joseph Dubree

and Elvira married Christian Gordon. Catharine died in 1880, aged seventy-three.

#### SARAH MAITLAND.

Sarah Thomas, born 1760, married Patrick Maitland. The latter was of Presbyterian Scotch-Irish stock, and people of that name lived in the easterly part of Hilltown. An Alexander Maitland is mentioned as a taxable in 1774. The name was popularly pronounced "Metlen." They had several children and removed to the Buffalo Valley.

#### ABEL THOMAS.

Abel Thomas was born about 1762. He was a twin with his sister Anna. He received an inheritance of fifty acres from his father, comprising the easterly portion of the homestead, now Jacob Huntsberger's. He also married a daughter of Abel James, Mary, a sister of the wife of his brother, Asa. In 1786 he sold thirty-six acres to Asa, and afterwards removed to Rockbridge county, Virginia, in company with his brother-in-law, Abel H. James. He first went to Maryland and then to Virginia, near the Natural Bridge. Mary, his wife, died in 1836, aged seventy-two. They left a large family, most of whom removed to Ohio and farther West. It is not known when Abel Thomas died, but probably not later than 1840.

#### ANNA MATHIAS.

Anna Thomas was also born 1762. She married John Mathias, eldest son of Benjamin Mathias. Had six children, viz.: Thomas, Mary, Abel, Benjamin, Anna and ———.

Thomas married Anna, a daughter of Abel Mathias, and had a son, Jared, who died. Mary married Robert Evans, a son of Ezra Evans and had children—Anna and Abel. Thomas



*THE THOMAS FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.*

27

died in Reading October 8, 1824. Abel Britain. Removed to Illinois, where  
Evans married Amanda Summers and she died. Had children — Robert,  
Anna married John Riale, of New Mary and Warren.

*NOTE.*—Asa Thomas was born February, 1753, not 1853, as printed on page 23.

## CHAPTER VI.

## REV. JOHN THOMAS.

John Thomas, the second son of Rev. William Thomas, was born soon after his parents arrived in America, December, 1713. There are some discrepancies in Mathias' statement of the date of his birth, and the date on his tombstone, but the above is given as the nearest approximation. The place of his birth was at Radnor, now Delaware county, where his father was then seeking to retrieve his fortune by working at coopering. He was a child at the time of his father's removal to Hilltown and grew up there. What advantages of early education he received, or where he attended school, we have no means of knowing. His education was doubtless only rudimentary, and he did not receive any special training for the ministry, except as he may have received it from his father. In early life he was a farmer, and in fact, all his life was actively engaged in agricultural pursuit, inasmuch as the ministerial calling in those days was pursued in connection with active business labors by nearly all country ministers, who could not live upon the scanty salaries paid.

About the year 1738, having arrived at the age of twenty-five, he married Sarah James, of Radnor, then only

seventeen years of age. He did not receive a call to the ministry till near middle life, in 1749, at the age of thirty-six, and was ordained two years afterwards. In the early years of his ministry he appeared to have labored as an assistant to both Rev. Benjamin Griffith, at Montgomery, and of his father at Hilltown. As old age and growing infirmities came more and more upon his father, he doubtless more commonly filled his place in the pulpit, and in after years the same was the case at Montgomery. Morgan Edwards, in his volume concerning the condition of the Baptist church of America, written in 1770, estimates the salary or "living" of the pastor of Montgomery and Hilltown at that time as equivalent to £40 a year. At that date the united membership of both places was ninety-nine, with a congregation of ninety families. The members bearing the name of Thomas were John Thomas, minister; Ephraim Thomas, elder; Joseph Thomas, deacon, Joseph Thomas, Mannasseh Thomas, Enoch Thomas, Thomas Thomas, Job Thomas, Sarah Thomas, Elenor Thomas, Sarah Thomas, Mary Thomas, Rebecca Thomas, Sarah Thomas, besides Gwen Morris, daughter of Rev. William Thomas. In ad-

dition were the names of several women, whose maiden names had been Thomas.

In 1768 Rev. Benjamin Griffith, the veteran pastor of Montgomery, died at the age of eighty, after a long pastorate of forty-eight years. After his death John Thomas was installed as sole pastor of the church, and continued as such for the next thirteen years, comprising the period of the Revolution. The erection of Hilltown into a separate church took place during his ministry, and was due to three causes. The first was alone sufficient—the obvious one of the inconvenient distance to Montgomery, especially to many families in northern Hilltown. The second was due to jealousies and rivalries, especially at Montgomery. It is well known that whilst a Godly man, John Thomas was a preacher of only moderate abilities, and was not as capable a man as his father. Tradition relates that he was slow in speech, and that the irreverent among his congregation declared that his brother Mannasseh, who did not pretend to be a preacher, could excel him in that line, when he arose to exhort. The old Montgomery church contained men of gifts, discernment and influence, who wished a better preacher. In his jubilee sermon, preached in 1831, Rev. Joseph Mathias thus speaks of this matter: "Elder John Thomas was not considered so eminently possessed of ministerial gifts as his predecessor. Abel, the son of Benjamin Griffith, had also been called to the ministry and frequently preached at Montgomery; but finally settled with the church at Brandywine, and there continued for many years. There was also a Daniel Loufborrow, who came among them a short time previous to

the separation, and as is often the case with something new, he stole the hearts of some of the people of Montgomery. He continued with them some time after the church at Hilltown was constituted, and then removed to the Redstone settlement." So it appears that dissatisfaction at Montgomery with John Thomas had considerable to do with the separation. But the most powerful cause was of a political nature, owing to the fierce animosities engendered by the Revolutionary War. Whilst in the Scotch-Irish settlements the people were almost unanimous in their hostility towards Great Britain, there was a more divided sentiment among the Welsh, and a considerable minority sympathized with the Mother Country or were lukewarm in behalf of the cause of independence. Mathias tells the story in this wise: The last and most prominent circumstance that influenced the brethren at Hilltown to the measure at that time was the Revolutionary War and the party spirit and collision of sentiment which prevailed in this as in other sections of the country. There were two political parties, known as Whigs and Tories, the former warmly attached to the cause of liberty and supporting the independence of the States. The Tories retained the sentiment of loyalty and gave aid and comfort to the forces of King George III. Congress had passed an act requiring the people to subscribe to the "Test Act," and take the oath of allegiance. The majority did so, but many refused. The latter were liable to fine and imprisonment if they set foot beyond the line of their respective counties. This law the more violent Whigs frequently enforced upon their neighbors, even

when the latter meant no harm, such as crossing into Philadelphia (now Montgomery) county on their way to market or to church. On going to Montgomery meeting they were sometimes detained, threatened, disturbed and maltreated. At one time a number were arrested when attending Montgomery and carried before Peter Evans, a Justice of the Peace, living just east of Colmar Station. He was also a member of the church, and although a strong Whig, saw at once that their arrest was rather from malicious motives, and that it was giving the law a meaning that was never intended. He released them, and advised that there should be no more such arrests. Yet these arrests so annoyed many of the Hilltown members that they determined to seek a separation from Montgomery. After considerable negotiation the Montgomery brethren consented and fifty-four members living in Hilltown were constituted as a separate church November 28, 1781. Among these were three of the children of Rev. William Thomas. They were the pastor, John Thomas, Mannassah Thomas and Gwenty Morris.

During the succeeding years of his pastorate over the new church, John Thomas seems to have been greatly blessed in his ministry, not less than fifty-four new members being baptized within the next three or four years, thus doubling the original size of the church. There were other large gatherings under the ministry of his successor down to the close of the century. But there were causes at work, continuing down to the present day, which have prevented the Hilltown church from growing with the general increase of the population of the coun-

try. This was the change of population caused by the emigration elsewhere of the descendants of the original Welsh people. Their places were supplied by people of another race and language, preferring another religious faith and exceedingly tenacious and conservative towards changes in their manners, customs, language or manner of thinking. They had their own churches and did not care to become Baptists. The Welsh were comparatively intelligent and enterprising, but were not disposed to be plodders or to seek a livelihood from a soil not always the most genial. Many emigrated West or South or went into mercantile or professional business in the towns or cities. Then there were the improvident, intemperate ones, who were poor farmers. They became involved in debt and had to sell their land. A German was ever ready to buy, and these were either Mennonites, Lutherans or German Reformed. The decreasing few Welsh Baptists that remained felt a sense of isolation in their surroundings of uncongenial society, and hastened to get elsewhere among people of their own kind and religious faith. Thus the process of change kept constantly going on, and now the Hilltown church is no stronger than fifty years ago, nor numbers more members than in the days when John Thomas preached in the old house during the decade succeeding the Revolution. Contrary to the generally received opinion, the German element in Hilltown was very numerous, even before the period of the Revolution. In 1774 the German names among the list of 143 taxables were 68, as compared with 60 Welsh and 15 Scotch-Irish or English. Since then it has relatively increased until



it forms five sixths of the population, which is nearly five times greater than a century ago.

Elder John Thomas ministered to the new church for nearly eight years after its organization. But already old age and its infirmities was growing upon him. The last time he administered the rite of baptism was in June, 1786. From the effects of a slight paralytic stroke he became so disabled that it was with difficulty that he could be borne to the two places of worship and attend to his ministerial labors. He requested the church to look out for some one to assist him. Therefore, on the 26th of March, 1789, the church in council assembled chose Rev. James McLaughlin, a young man, of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, to become their pastor. He accepted the position, which he held for the next fifteen years, and was very successful in his ministry at Hilltown. Mr. Thomas lingered "in a peaceful frame of mind" till the 31st of October, 1790, when he expired. According to his tombstone he was seventy-nine years of age, indicating his birth to have been in 1711. It was probably later, unless the date (1712) of his father's arrival in America is incorrectly given by Mathias, as the two do not correspond. His widow, Sarah, lingered on earth yet nearly fifteen years. Her life was extended to the great age of ninety-four, and she died April 5, 1805. She was a goodly and pious woman. Hers was the first funeral discourse preached by Rev. Joseph Mathias, from a text of her own selecting: "In Thy presence there is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore."

Before proceeding to trace the descendants of John Thomas, we will

notice the locality of the lands he possessed. As before mentioned, he received by inheritance in 1757 the tract of 212 acres which his father had purchased in 1728 of James Logan. This comprised nearly all the farm now owned by Jacob Seiple, that of Samuel Detweiler, and a number of small places adjoining Fair Hill on the northeast and south, as well as the site of that village. It was something over half a mile in width from northeast to southwest, and one and a third miles in extent in the opposite direction. Somewhere on this tract his father erected a house for him, the site of which is not definitely determined. There were old houses at both Seiple's and Detweiler's and on the present Maria Myers property.

During his lifetime he also purchased additional lands. In 1750 he bought 100 acres of his brother Thomas out of his 500 acre tract, but sold fifty-two acres of it to his son-in-law, Nathan Britain, in 1760, and which, in 1793, fell into the hands of George Leidy. At some period unknown to the writer, he also purchased a farm on the slope of the valley, a mile northwest of Leidytown, watered by the Neshaminy, here only a rivulet. The time of this purchase was after 1776. This is now owned by William Moore. It was bought of Jeremiah Vastine. At the latter place he lived at the time of his death. In his last will, made May 31st, 1788, he disposes of 333 acres to his four daughters, his only surviving children. The purport of his will is as follows:

To Anna, widow of Nathan Britain, 90 acres, where she now lives.

To Rebecca, wife of Daniel Pugh, the plantation of 90 acres, now in possession of said Pugh.

To daughter Leah, wife of Samuel Jones, plantation of 70 acres, now in possession of Thomas Morris, adjoining lands devised to Rebecca Pugh and lands lately sold to Josiah Lunn, and lands of Asa Thomas, John Reiggale, and my other lands.

To Sarah, wife of John Blackwell, all my plantation I now live on, being the same I bought of Jeremiah Vastine, containing 83 acres.

The Nathan Britain place is now that of Frederick Deipperts and Jonathan Yocum, and the old dwelling stood on Yocum's land, northeast of Fairhill. The homestead of 70 acres willed to Leah Jones is supposed to have been the present Detwiler farm and other land to the southward. There once stood an old house in front of Detweiler's overlooking a meadow-like ravine, through which flows a rivulet to the southward. There was

also an old house on the Myers property. The latter was sold in 1799 to Isaac Swartz.

Daniel Pugh lived where Jacob Seiple now does, and an old house formerly stood on the site of the present modern frame dwelling. Here for a long period lived Daniel Straley. This was on the extreme eastern corner of the tract John Thomas had inherited from his father. The Vastine property went to Sarah Blackwell.

Half a mile northwest of the village of Leidy town was the homestead where Rev. John Thomas passed the closing years of his life. On the brow of the meadow bank, a few rods west of the modern dwelling of the present owner, may yet be distinguished the site of his habitation. Compared with the farm houses of to-day it was quite small, built of stone, and of one story and a half.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CHILDREN OF REV. JOHN THOMAS.

The names of the four daughters of John Thomas were Anna, Rebecca, Leah and Sarah.

## ANNA BRITTAİN.

Anna Thomas, eldest daughter of the preacher, was born in the early part of 1739. About 1760, she married Nathan Brittain, who is mentioned as a taxable in Hilltown in 1774. He was born in 1732 and belonged to a numerous family of that name. He died in the prime of life, during the Revolution, September 2, 1778, in his forty-seventh year. His widow was remarried to John Hubbs, by whom she had a son, Jesse. She survived her second husband also, and died January 30, 1819, aged eighty years. Nathan Brittain had several children, viz: Elijah, Nathan junior, Rachel, Sarah, Elizabeth and Anne.

Elijah Brittain married Jane Evans, by whom he had two sons, Evan and John. About the year 1790, he with his family removed to the West, and there he died.

Nathan Brittain left Hilltown also when young. He was twice or thrice married.

Rachel Brittain married Josiah Lunn, and had one son, Jesse. The latter married ——; had children, and removed West. Rachel Lunn

died a young woman in 1789.

Sarah Brittain married Joseph Thomas, her cousin, who was a son of Ephraim, and grandson of Rev. William Thomas. They had children: Elinor, Ephraim, Nathan and Abner, concerning whom, see in connection with Joseph Thomas, son of Ephraim.

Elizabeth Brittain, married Owen Rowland, son of Stephen Rowland. She died in June, 1809, and her husband in April, 1816. By Owen Rowland she had three sons: Milton, Addison and Horatio. The first and last died when young men, but Addison removed over half a century ago to Meadville along with his uncle Stephen Rowland. There he remained a bachelor, was considered miserly in his habits and accumulated a considerable fortune. His death took place in 1880 and the bulk of the property came by inheritance to the children of Artemas Rowland, of Hilltown. Previous to the marriage of Elizabeth Brittain to Owen Rowland she was unfortunate in having an illegitimate daughter Tacy, who upon growing up, married Aaron Milner, and by him had son, Augustus. Tacy Milner then married Nathan Thomas, son of Joseph Thomas. Had six children—Elizabeth, Joseph, Joel, Sarah, Anna and Nathan.

Anne Brittain married John Evans, of New Britain, and had children—Brittain, Nathan, Joseph, Josiah, John, Oliver and Huldah Ann. Brittain Evans married Priscilla Hines, and removed to Ohio, where he died of drinking milk from cows that had eaten the poisonous milk weed. John and Oliver were not married. Huldah Ann married Alexander Wigton.

The Brittain family above mentioned were numerously represented on the roll of Hilltown church book, eight of that name being members in 1770, viz.: Nathan, John, Nathaniel, Joseph, Richard, Ann, Elizabeth and Rachel. In 1783 there were ten of the same name recorded, Abigail, John junior, and Jane being the additional names, whilst Nathan and Richard had disappeared.

#### REBECCA PUGH.

Rebecca Thomas was born in the early part of 1740. She married Daniel Pugh, and passed her life in the log house that stood on the high ridge of land where is now the dwelling of Jacob Seiple. She was a member of Montgomery and Hilltown churches from her youth up through a long life. In 1770 it appears on the records as Rebecca Thomas, and in 1781 as Rebecca Pugh. Her husband was Daniel Pugh. The latter was the son of Hugh Pugh, who came from Wales about 1725, and settling in Chester county, gave name to the present village of Pughtown. He married Mary Harris and removed to Montgomery county above Norristown, in Lower Providence, settling on land where afterwards was Fitzsimons' tavern. His children, seven in number, were Ann, Mary, Elizabeth, Hannah, Rachel, Evan and Daniel. Ann married Owen

Rodgers, Mary married a Mr. Brittain, Elizabeth to Howell Griffith, Hannah to David Mathias, Rachel to Abraham Morris, Evan remained a bachelor and Daniel to Rebecca Thomas.

Rebecca Pugh had two sons and one daughter: John, Issachar and Sarah. Like her eldest sister, she lived to an old age, and died the same year, June 29, 1819, in her eightieth year. Her husband, who had been born in 1731, died September 7, 1813, aged eighty-two. The original Pugh homestead was sold in 1816 to Isaac Huntsberger and Catharine Bergy.

John Pugh, born June 2, 1761, first married Rachel Bates, daughter of Humphrey Bates, of Montgomery. She died in 1782 without children, and he, many years afterwards, married Elizabeth Owen, daughter of Owen Owen and granddaughter of Griffith Owen, in 1800. He was thrice chosen to the Legislature and to Congress, in 1800, 1804 and 1806, representing the district of which Bucks formed a part. He had two children, Sophia and John B. Pugh. Sophia married William T. Rogers.

John Pugh became prominent as a politician in the county and held the lucrative office of Register of Will and Recorder of Deeds for eleven years by appointment of the Governor, which he first received in 1810. He was commissioned Justice of the Peace in 1796, and received his last commission for the same office from Governor Hiestler, August 23, 1821. He died in Doylestown at the age of eighty-two, in 1842. Both John Pugh and his father, Daniel, were members of Hilltown church.

William T. Rogers, the husband of Sophia Pugh, came from a New England family, his father, William C.



Rogers, coming from Connecticut, first to Philadelphia (where his son was born in 1799), and afterwards to Warrington. His son learned the trade of a printer with Asher Miner, and became editor and proprietor of the *Doylestown Democrat* from 1821 till 1829. He became prominent in politics and active in the militia. He served eight years in the Senate, of which he was Speaker two terms. He was also a Major General of the militia. He died in Doylestown June 30, 1866. Their children were: John P., James, Edward, William and Marshall.

John Blackwell Pugh married Elizabeth Fox, daughter of Judge John Fox, and Margery, daughter of Gilbert Rodman. Mr. Fox was Judge of the Courts of this judicial district from 1830 to 1840. John B. Pugh became a lawyer, and has served for many years as Justice of the Peace. Has a number of children, Edward F., Mary, Rodman, Sophia and Marshall.

Issachar Pugh, the second son of Daniel Pugh, went to Chester county. Concerning him or his descendants the writer is not informed, except that he had a son, Issachar, junior.

Sarah, the daughter of Daniel Pugh, married Peter Medary, and had one son, Pugh. Peter Medary (now spelt "Madeira") had a son Pugh and a daughter Maria. The son lived in Philadelphia and died there a few years ago. The daughter married Rev. Mr. Fielding. Both went to Africa as missionaries and died shortly after reaching there. Neither son nor daughter left issue.

LEAH JONES.

Leah Thomas was born about 1742.

She married Samuel Jones. We find that both she and her husband were members of the church in 1770, and his name appears on the list of taxables in 1774. But in 1781 the names of neither are on the church records. Mathias says he "raised a large family, and many years ago he removed to the Western country." The time of his removal is uncertain, nor does the writer know aught concerning his descendants. His wife inherited the southern corner of her father's estate, southeast of Fairhill, the surface nearly level or sloping to the south and east, intersected by ravines. We find as late as 1799 that a Samuel Jones sold twenty-nine acres to Isaac Swartz.

SARAH BLACKWELL.

Sarah Thomas, the youngest daughter, born about 1746, married John Blackwell, of New Jersey, and had a large family. She inherited the Vastine farm of eighty-three acres, north of Snyder's mill. This was sold by Blackwell to Robert Shannon in 1795. They removed to Hunterdon county, New Jersey. Little is known of the family, save of a son, John T. Blackwell, who, in 1827, lived in Flemington and held the office of County Surrogate, and had previously held other important trusts. He had a son, John Pugh Blackwell. Blackwell appears to have been a clergyman, as we see the title of "Rev." was attached to his name in the old deeds. From these we glean the names of two other of his children, Lewis and Elizabeth. At the date of 1795 the Blackwells were living in New Jersey.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## EPHRAIM THOMAS.

Ephraim Thomas, the third son of William Thomas, was born about 1719. He grew up and married young, or about the time of attaining his majority. This was in 1740. His wife was Eleanor Bates, a daughter of Joseph Bates, of Montgomery, and a sister of the first wife of his brother, Thomas. Her father was born in Wales in 1672, and came to this country in company with his brothers, Humphrey and Job. None left posterity except Joseph, his brothers dying when young men. He married Margaret, daughter of James Hammer, a Welshman, about 1715. James Hammer came from Wales and his daughter was born there. Joseph Bates had six children: Thomas, Margaret, Eleanor, Humphrey, Joseph and Sarah. Of these, Thomas married Sarah Griffith, and had children, Rebecca, married to Job Thomas; Ruth, married to Amos Thomas; Jesse, to Martha West; Thomas junior, to Ann Darrah, and Hannah and Margaret were never married. Margaret, daughter of Joseph Bates, married Thomas Thomas, as aforesaid; Eleanor, to Ephraim Thomas; Humphrey married Sarah Lewis, and Rachel to John Pugh. Joseph in — removed to North Carolina and was killed by the Indians, whilst Sarah

died a young woman. Joseph Bates, father of this family, died September 24, 1741, aged sixty-nine.

Old William Thomas built his son Ephraim a stone dwelling house, one and a half stories high, previous to 1740, and in his last will gave him 150 acres of land. This dwelling stood near the site of the present house of Levi Thomas, one of his descendants. The 150 acre tract was half of the 300 acres bought of Logan in 1718, and was about half a mile square, now intersected by a highway running to Perkasio. It is now much subdivided and is owned by Alfred Weiss, Mary Ann Benson, Fritz Teuyful, Levi Hange, Jonathan Gulick, Levi Thomas, Belinda Thomas and a small part of Jacob Seiple's place. The whole of this lay sloping towards the northwest and abounds with springs of water which flow towards the east branch of the Perkiomen.

During his lifetime, Ephraim Thomas bought four other tracts of land, so as to have farms for his sons. The first was purchased at an early period or before his father's death, in 1749. It consisted of ninety-nine acres bought of Edward Eaton, and was situated at some distance from the paternal homestead, in the north-

eastern part of the township. It was part of 195 acres which Linford Lardner in 1748 sold to Eaton, and part of 2,500 acres allotted to Richard Penn in 1735. This farm now belongs to John Kulp, and was the one bequeathed by Ephraim Thomas to his eldest son, Enoch.

The next plantation was not bought till 1774, when 135 acres were purchased of John Penn for £407, then bounded by lands of Jeremiah Vastine, Joseph Lunn and others. It was part of the 2,500 acres held by the Penns. It lay in the central part of Hilltown, and is now mostly owned by Samuel Yoder. It was the farm bequeathed to Ephraim junior.

The third purchase was made just on the eve of the Revolution, and only a year before his death. It was made in 1775, comprising 129½ acres, for which £404 were paid. It was part of the Manor of Perkasio, of 10,000 acres, and part of 2,500 acres which, in 1767, Richard Penn sold to John Penn, and which the former had received in 1734. In 1775 it was bounded by lands of Nicholas Barringer, Peter Gruber, Joseph Day, Jacob Leidy and Michael Durstein. All these were Germans, except Day. It is now the property of Mararai Gulick, and was the farm bequeathed to his son Joseph Thomas.

These several purchases and the prices paid indicate that Ephraim Thomas was possessed of considerable wealth for those times, and was a prosperous man in his worldly concerns.

In 1770 Ephraim Thomas made a fourth purchase of 137½ acres of Sheriff Joseph Elliott, sold as the property of Levi Owens. In 1754 it had been sold by Thomas Phillips to Griffith Owen, who by will left it to

Levi. This by will of Ephraim Thomas, Sr., was, in 1776, left to his son Enoch. The latter sold it to Samuel Delp in 1785. It was on this plantation that Enoch Thomas lived at the time of his father's death, as is stated in the will of the latter. It was bounded by lands of Henry Leidy, Abraham Huntsberger and Thomas Mathias, and was situated towards the northeast side of the township. In 1793 Enoch Thomas sold to George Snyder 116 acres, which he had bought in 1785 of Sheriff Samuel Dean.

Concerning the personality of Ephraim Thomas, we learn only that he was in build and shape like his family, short and stocky, with dark hair and eyes. He was a devout member of the Baptist church at Montgomery, and possessed that piety, consistent life and mental ability which induced the church to make him one of its ruling elders. It is said that he was very strong in his faith, and had peculiar gifts for administering the consolations of religion to the sick and dying, whom he was often called upon to visit. The same maladies that afflict modern life prevailed among our forefathers, even amid the rude life of the forest and field. It is said that he was greatly afflicted with dyspepsia, and it is certain that his life was cut short long before old age by some kindred malady. Many of his children inherited weakly constitutions; four of his daughters died of pulmonary consumption, and none of his sons reached a great age. During his last sickness the clouds of darkness and despair gathered about his mind, clouding his religious hopes for a time; probably induced by his physical condition. He told his family that this ought not to be known, as likely to

cast reproach upon the faith he had so fluently preached to others. But before he entered the dark valley, the clouds lifted, and his end was blessed with glorious hope and joy. He died during the summer of Independence, July 31st, 1776, at the age of fifty-seven. Upon his tombstone at Hilltown is a curious epitaph, which in quaintness ranks with that of his father. It breathes a touch of the spirit of vainglory characteristic of the Welsh and other Celtic races. The first four lines run with halting metre :

Entombed, I here an Elder lie,  
My work on earth is done,  
The church, I commit to God's care,  
The Spirit and the Son.

The vendue of his goods and chattels was held on the following 5th of Sep-

tember. Of these were sold four horses, five cows, a bull, two shoats and eighteen sheep. His four sons each purchased a horse, paying from \$40 to \$60 each. Although the deacon was a man of peace, he possessed two guns, a cutlass and a scabbard. His personal effects brought \$500, an amount equivalent to a much greater sum now. The widow, Eleanor Thomas, is recorded as among the members of Montgomery in 1770, and also among the constituent members of Hilltown in 1781. She was fifty-six years old at the time of her husband's death, whom she survived for twenty-six years, dying May, 1802, at the age of eighty-two.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CHILDREN OF EPHRAIM THOMAS.

Ephraim and Elinor Thomas had eleven children, born between the years of 1741 and 1765. They were Enoch, Margaret, Elias, Dinah, Enoch, Rachel, Sarah, Elinor, Joseph, Ephraim and John. The two Enochs are accounted for by the death of one.

## ENOC THOMAS.

The first Enoch Thomas was born April 2, 1741; the second October 24, 1749. The latter married Sarah Harris, daughter of Henry Harris, probably before his father's death. He was a member of Montgomery in 1770, was a constituent member of Hilltown in 1781, and is on the list of taxables in 1774. Henry Harris lived on the farm now Samuel Heckler's, and was the nephew of Benjamin Philips, whose place he inherited from him. He sold it to Peter Bodder in 1762. Enoch received from his father the ninety-nine acre tract, bought of Edward Eaton in 1749, and now owned by John Kulp. This he sold in 1793, and removed to Union county. From thence he went to Chester county, and then to Philadelphia. He died April 19, 1807, in his fifty-eighth year. His wife died November 27, 1821. The family seems to have been a prolific one, as like his father he had eleven children that

grew up, besides others that died in youth. Their names were John, Arthur, William, Enoch, junior, Martha, Elizabeth, Margaret, Mary, Isabella, Ann and Elinor. Concerning them our information is scanty.

John married a Miss Wilson, removed to the West and there died. Arthur married Susannah Gillespie, removed to the banks of the Susquehanna, and died at Milton, where his family remained at the time of Matthias' record. His widow and children removed West. William married Catharine Lutz, removed to Dayton, Ohio, and had seven or eight children, of whom we have the names of John, Harvey, William, Samuel, Joseph, Sarah and Arthur. Enoch, junior, married Miss Freeman, and resided in Philadelphia. Had children Sarah, Emma, Enoch and Lafayette. Martha married Amos Thomas, had no children and removed to Ohio. Amos Thomas was, we believe, a grandson of Ephraim Thomas and son of Walter Thomas. He taught school in Hilltown about 1820. Elizabeth married Mason Morris, son of Benjamin Morris, by whom she had several children. He was a clockmaker, and removed to Ohio in 1818. Margaret married Isaac James, son of William James, of New

Britain. They had six children and removed to Ohio. Mary Thomas married John Milnor. She had children Martha, Lydia, Hannah and Thomas. They removed to the banks of the Susquehanna, probably Union county, and there died. Milnor's family afterwards removed to Philadelphia. Isabella Thomas was born in 1786. She was a pious woman, and married Martin Beck. They had six children, Caroline, Levi, William, Isabella and Harriet. Caroline Beck married Peter Dietz, of Philadelphia. She had three children, Charles M., Isabella and Albert. Of these, Charles is pastor of the Baptist church, Ridley Park, Isabella resides in Philadelphia, and Albert died some years since. He had served three years in the army during the Civil War, and left a wife and four children. Rev. Levi G. Beck was born August 20, 1812, married Esther Jenkins, of Philadelphia, in 1833, and became a Baptist clergyman when a young man, entering the ministry in 1833; served as pastor at Trenton, Chester, New Britain and Freehold, and is now pastor at Bristol. For many years was employed by the Baptist State Convention to travel over the State of Pennsylvania in its behalf. Had children Theodore, Edwin, Anne and Emma. William Beck, born 1813, died in 1832 unmarried. Sarah Beck, now living in Philadelphia, married Joseph M. Thomas, and had seven children, now all deceased. Isabella and Harriet died in infancy. Ann Thomas married Whildon Foster and removed to near Wilmington, Delaware. Lived also at Trenton. Had twelve children, Charles, George, William, Isaac, Whildon, Eliza, Martha, Clara, Mary, Sarah, Emma and Isabella. Six of these are now living.

Elinor Thomas, the youngest daughter of Enoch, married Samuel Derrick and removed to the vicinity of Wilmington. She is now living at Ridley Park, in her eighty-sixth year. Had children Samuel, William, John, Eliza, Mary and Ellen. Arthur Thomas, son of William, mentioned above, is a Baptist clergyman, and was pastor of the church at Chester until recently. Is now a resident of Mt. Holly, New Jersey.

#### MARGARET LEWIS.

Margaret Thomas was the eldest child of Ephraim Thomas that grew up. She was born October 27, 1742. She married Richard Lewis, son of John Lewis, one of the first settlers of Hilltown. He lived in the northern part of the township. His father had two wives, of which the first was the mother of Richard. Richard Lewis had a considerable posterity, of whom the writer knows little. One son, Elias, married Elizabeth Hague, and had a family. Richard Lewis died in 1801, and his wife about 1803, at the age of sixty-one. There was a son, Abel Lewis, who was living in Hilltown as late as 1830. A Martha Lewis, of Hilltown, married Benjamin Griffith, son of Nathaniel Griffith. They removed to Honeybrook, Chester county, in 1798, and had numerous descendants, who will be spoken of under the head of the Griffith family.

#### ELIAS THOMAS.

Elias Thomas was born January 14, 1745. He was thirty-one at the time of his father's death, and inherited the homestead still possessed by his grandchildren. He was married to Elizabeth Howell in 1767, at the age of twenty-two. His children were nine in number, born between 1768 and 1782. These were Walter, John, Eli-



nor, Issachar, John, Sarah, Ephraim, Issachar and Nathan. Of these, the first named John and Issachar died in infancy. Walter Thomas, the eldest, was born July 7, 1768. He married his cousin, Mary Godshalk, daughter of Elizabeth Thomas, who married Henry Godshalk. He removed to Jay county, Indiana, and had five children, Amos, Elias, Hiram, Elizabeth and Lydia. Amos died in 1799. Elizabeth married John McCoy, and Lydia married Hiram Perry. Elinor Thomas was born November 23, 1771. We hear no mention of her, and she probably died young. John Thomas was born April 9, 1775; was never married. He was not very bright and somewhat intemperate. He inherited a portion of his father's estate, on which he lived in a small house by himself and at other times with his brother and sister, Ephraim and Sarah. Sarah, born March 28, 1777, remained single. Ephraim, born November 21, 1778, remained a bachelor and lived with his sister, Sarah, at the homestead, where Levi Thomas now resides. He died October 24, 1847. Issachar Thomas, born September 2, 1780, married Ann, daughter of Job Thomas, his cousin. He inherited a part of his father's homestead, and always remained in Hilltown. He died January 24, 1860, in his eightieth year. Ann, his wife, died March 30, 1866, in her seventy-eighth year. He had four children: Levi, Maria, Rebecca and Malinda. The sisters remained unmarried, all living together on part of the homestead. The two eldest died in 1878. Levi married Malinda Lunn, but has no surviving children. From the documents, ample recollections and traditions of this family the writer is indebted for important portions of

this history. Nathan Thomas, the youngest son of Elias, was born December 9, 1782. He married Catharine Connolly and removed to Ohio. He had ten children: Mary, Sarah, Elias, Jesse, Enos, Amos, Nathan, John and Ephraim. Sarah married Daniel Knight, and Mary married Samuel Flannery. Sarah resided at Delta, Ohio. The others all live near Point Harmer, same State. Elias Thomas, the ancestor of this family, died January 25, 1814, aged fifty-nine. His wife, Elizabeth, born October 13, 1740, died July 6, 1821, in her eighty-first year.

## DINAH MATHEWS.

Dinah Thomas was born October 23, 1747. Tradition relates that the daughters of Ephraim Thomas were bright, intelligent, vivacious and active women, but of rather weakly constitution. Dinah was short in stature, with a complexion quite dark, with black hair and eyes, with that fine-grained skin and features which indicates the predominance of the mental temperament, combined with the motive or bilious, betokening a keen, nervous, excitable and active character. She joined the Baptist church, and married Benjamin Mathews, of New Britain, September 22, 1768, at the age of twenty-one. We find on record a license for this marriage of the date of April 18, 1768. Benjamin was the son of John Mathew, and grandson of Simon Mathew, who came from Wales in 1712, and settled in New Britain, just east of Chalfont, in 1721. Both his father and grandfather had been deacons in New Britain Baptist church. Benjamin Mathews inherited a plantation bordering the Neshaminy, half a mile south of the village of New Britain, which his

father purchased of David Stevens in 1760. Here he built a large square two-story stone house in 1767, of the best style and class of that day. This sheltered three generations, and was only demolished in 1878. Though then a young man, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, December 7, 1764, again in 1770, and the last time in April, 1774. Here he lived all his days, was a prominent man in the community, and for many years a deacon of New Britain church. Benjamin and Dinah Mathews, were the parents of twelve children: Ann, Rachel, Eleanor, Joseph, Mary, Dinah, Sarah, Benjamin, Margaret, Lydia, Elizabeth and Joseph. Benjamin Mathews, Sr., died at the age of eighty-two, October 18, 1821. His wife, Dinah, was cut short in middle life, June 20, 1793, at the age of forty-six. Her husband afterwards married Rachel Mason, but had no children by his second wife. They have left many descendants, whom we will briefly mention.

Ann Mathews, born September 20, 1769, married Thomas Hough, and had five children: Elinor, Benjamin, Mary Ann, Oliver and Charlotte. Of these, Elinor, born 1799, married John Foulke. Benjamin married Jemima Foulke and had children Mathias, Thomas and Allen. Mary Ann Hough married John Gilbert, of Buckingham, and died in 1873. Had children Oliver, Harrison, Samuel, Josephine, Emily, Lydia, Hannah, Heil, Thomas and Charlotte. Joseph Hough remained unmarried. Charlotte Hough married Thomas Dungan. Ann Hough, mother of the above descendants, died of typhus fever in 1823.

Rachel, the second daughter of Benjamin Mathews, born February 21, 1771, first married Joseph Dungan,

and afterwards Isaac Morris. By Dungan, she had a son Charles, who became a Philadelphia merchant, married Ann Appleton and had three children: Mary, Jane, and Joseph. By Isaac Morris, she had three sons: Oliver, Burgess and John. The first died a young man. Burgess married Mary, daughter of John Riale. His son, Oliver G. Morris, is a well-known citizen of Line Lexington, who served three terms in the Legislature. John D. Morris became a lawyer, lived in Stroudsburg, was a member of the Legislature, and afterwards held important offices in Philadelphia under Presidents Pierce and Buchanan. He died in 1868. Rachel Morris, the mother of the above, died August 1st, 1856, at the age of eighty-five.

Eleanor Mathews, born June 13, 1772, married John Mathias, brother of Rev. Joseph Mathias. She died a young woman, April 14, 1804. She left no children.

Mary Mathews, born July 26, 1775, married James McEwen, of Warrington. He removed to Philadelphia, where he was prominent as a politician, and was a member of the Legislature. She died in 1844, leaving children, George, Mary Ann, Charles and Sarah. The two last married, the first to Elizabeth Shute, and has a family of children. He has been for many years ticket agent at the Berks street station of the North Pennsylvania Railroad. His sister Sarah married William Hamilton and had a daughter, Sarah, married to Charles Yeager.

Dinah Mathews, born November 18, 1777, married Rev. Joseph Mathias in 1804. She passed her days at the Mathias homestead in Hilltown, till 1846, when she removed to the premises now occupied by the family of

her son, John, near Chalfont. She was destined to reach great age, dying July, 1870, at the age of ninety-three. Had children Harvey, Thomas, Elizabeth, Lydia Ann, Benjamin, Rachel, Joseph and John. All are now deceased, excepting Rachel. Of these, only Elizabeth and John left descendants, Elizabeth marrying Newton Rowland, and John to Mary Pownall.

Sarah Mathews, born March 7, 1779, died unmarried, of consumption, February 25, 1806.

Margaret Mathews, born December 29, 1782, married David Swartz in 1807. Had children Eliza, Rachel, Owen and Dinah. Eliza married William S. Thomas, Rachel to Charles Young, Owen to Lydia Brunner and Rebecca Stone, and Dinah to John Hoxworth. All left children.

Elizabeth Mathews, born March 10, 1786, likewise fell a victim to consumption, February 14, 1807.

Lydia Mathews, born 1784, married Andrew Drake in 1822, and Thomas Hough in 1825. Had no children by either. She died in October, 1863, at the age of seventy-nine.

Benjamin Mathews, the eldest son, was born January 31, 1781. He inherited the ancestral homestead, where he always resided. He served as a soldier in 1814, at Marcus Hook, with the militia. He married Letitia Meredith, daughter of James Meredith, in 1816, and died March 17, 1843, at the age of sixty-two. His children were James, Rachel, Mary, Joseph, Benjamin, junior, John, Isabella and Edward (the writer of this history). Letitia, his widow, died in 1877, in her eighty-third year.

Joseph Mathews, the youngest, born January 18, 1789, married Martha, daughter of Lewis Bitting, in 1817.

Had children Sarah, Charles, Margaret, Ellen, Elizabeth, Anne and Miriam. Joseph Mathews lived on a portion of the ancestral property, and had a saw mill at the mouth of Cook's run. He died in 1859, and his widow in 1882, at the age of eighty-five.

#### RACHEL MATHEWS.

Rachel Thomas was born March 25, 1752. She married John Mathews, of New Britain, in the fall of 1774. She had but one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth. Rachel died whilst yet a young woman, of consumption. Her husband remarried to Rachel Fitzwater. He was the son of Edward Mathew, and grandson of Simon Mathew, the pioneer. Elizabeth, only daughter of John Mathew, married a tailor, named Thomas Lunn. They lived in Montgomery, where he died in 1814. Mathias says he was a very good and worthy man, and prospered in his worldly affairs. His five children were Elivia, Joseph, John, Silas and Oliver. Elivia married John S. Hough in 1818. Had children Wilhelmina, Benjamin and Thomas L. Oliver Lunn was a hatter and lived in Doylestown, and married Adaline Shade. Silas Lunn was unmarried and John Lunn removed to western New York, but died in Savannah, Ga.

#### SARAH MATHEWS.

Sarah Thomas was born April 27, 1754. She married Joseph Mathews, brother of Benjamin, husband of her sister Dinah. He lived at New Britain, at the homestead of his father, John, and the old one-story stone dwelling, built in 1744, is still in existence, and in which his wife passed her short married life. She was married about 1774, and died of consumption, October 1, 1778. She had two children, both of whom died in in-

fancy. Her husband remarried to Lydia Eaton; had two sons, Joseph and John, who were both physicians. He lived to a great age, surviving till 1842, at the age of ninety-five.

ELINOR MATHEWS.

Elinor Thomas, born January 24, 1756, was the fourth daughter of Ephraim Thomas, who married into the Mathew family and came to New Britain. She married Edward Mathews, son of Thomas Mathew, and grandson of Simon, and therefore cousin to the others. She was married at the early age of eighteen, in the spring of 1774. Her husband was then only twenty-one. He inherited the plantation of his father and grandfather, now owned by the heirs of John Mathias, east of Chalfont. He was a very good husband, handsome and of very fine personal appearance. He was a worthy and pious man of excellent ability, and for many years a deacon of New Britain church. He died in 1814 at the age of fifty-nine, whilst his wife did not reach the age of fifty, dying August 26, 1805. They had four children: Abel, Simon, John and Rebecca. Abel married Elizabeth Jones and had a family, none of whom left descendants in this part of the country. Simon, born in 1781, married Isabella Stephens in 1805. He partook of his father's good qualities and personal character, was a deacon and a pious man. He died in 1828. Had son, Dr. Charles H. Mathews, of Doylestown, who died in 1849, leaving one son, Henry Mathews, now a lawyer of Philadelphia. John Mathew, born 1782, was a merchant and married Sarah Humphrey. He died in 1817. Had children Simon, Matilda, Mary and Elizabeth. Rebecca, daughter of Edward Mathew, married

Charles Humphrey, and had children Euphenia and Elinor. The first married Kern Evans, and her sister to Hiram Evans. Both removed to Ohio.

JOSEPH THOMAS.

Joseph Thomas was born April 27, 1758. He married Sarah Brittain daughter of Nathan and Anna Brittain, who was his cousin, being the daughter of Anna Thomas, daughter of Rev. John Thomas. Joseph Thomas was but eighteen at his father's death, and inherited the plantation of 129½ acres purchased of John Penn in 1775. It is now where Maria Gulick lives in central Hilltown. He had five children, Nathan, Ephraim, Ellen, Abner and Sarah. The two latter died young, the first in 1816 aged thirty-one, and the latter in 1817 aged twenty-three. Nathan Thomas married Tacy Milner (formerly Evans) and had children—Abner, Joseph and Sarah, who died unmarried.

Ephraim Thomas, son of Joseph, married Christianna Hoffman, by whom he had two children, Joseph and Ephraim. He died September, 1814.

Ellen Thomas married Thomas Williams, son of Isaac and Elizabeth Williams. Had children—William, Noah, Thomas, Nathan, Sarah, Cyrenius, Pamela, Maria and Amy. Of these Sarah married Ashbel Jones. William and Noah went west. Nathan married Rebecca Abinetha, and also went west. Thomas married Margaret Hummel. Pamela married Jesse Johnson, and Cyrenius to a Miss Barndt. He became a physician. Maria and Amy were unmarried. Joseph Thomas the ancestor of this family, died ere reaching advanced years on December 8th, 1811, aged fifty-three.

EPHRAIM THOMAS, JUNIOR.

Ephraim Thomas, junior, was the



youngest son that lived, his younger brother John, dying in youth. He was born March 9th, 1760, and was but sixteen at his father's death. He inherited the farm purchased by his father in 1774 of John Penn, of 135 acres, now occupied by Samuel Yoder. It was sold in 1795 to a German named Paul Frantz. In 1793 he purchased a farm in New Britain where he passed the last forty years of his life. This was purchased of Peter Eaton, and is now owned by Eugene James, containing 100 acres, situated half a mile west of New Britain village. He married Sydney Kelly, daughter of Erasmus and Hannah Kelley. They had six sons, Erasmus, Elias, Matthew and Ephraim of whom lived to grow up. Ephraim Thomas was a religious man and a deacon of New Britain. He died in 1833 and his widow in 1837 at the age of eighty-one. He lived to be the oldest of all his father's family, but he was not a robust man. Of these sons of Ephraim Thomas, Erasmus became a physician and married Patience Morris, daughter of Benjamin Morris, and had seven sons, Horatio, Benjamin, Charles, Frederick, Erasmus, Ephraim, Joseph and Henry. He kept his father's farm in New Britain for a time after his death but in 1838 he sold it to James Meredith, and the whole family removed to the

banks of the Wabash in the State of Indiana.

Elias Thomas possessed many good points of character, was good-looking, excellent company, a fine singer, lively and jocular, but was ruined by intemperance, and finally died in Blockley almshouse, in 1851. He married Rebecca Walker. Had children—Ephraim and Mary Ann. The latter married in Philadelphia, where she is now living.

Mathew Thomas was likewise intemperate. He married Lydia James, a fine woman, and a sister of Colonel Isaiah James. She died in 1817 of consumption. They had a daughter Sydney, who married Thomas Lunn. The latter had a son named Lewis. He removed to Columbus, Ohio, and became a physician. Mathew Thomas died in 1836 at the age of 54.

Ephraim Thomas, junior, married Ann Tucker. They had a family of children, Amanda, Septimus, Enoch, Lydiann, Patience, Carolina and Eliza. He removed to Pottsville. His daughter Amanda married Rev. Thomas Cutcheon, pastor of New Britain from 1836 to 1839, and who removed to Wisconsin. Eliza married in New Jersey. Ephraim Thomas, junior, died in Pottsville, and was buried at New Britain many years ago.



## CHAPTER X.

## MANNASSEH THOMAS.

Mannasseh was the fourth son of Elder William Thomas, and born in the year 1721. He married Elizabeth Evans. The date of his marriage is unknown, but supposed to be about 1750. His father built him a house on the slope of a meadow bank where is now the dwelling of Joseph Landes. He received by will the northerly half of the 300 acres, bought of Logan in 1718, and which was divided between him and his brother Ephraim. It was about half a mile square, and the surface sloped toward the Perkiomen. It is now intersected by a highway, and owned by several parties. He was probably in the occupancy of this long before his father's death, or after the time of his marriage. He also became the owner of at least 175 acres additional. The first of these tracts was 100 acres bought of his brother Thomas in 1750, and was part of his 500 acre tract purchased that year of John Smith, son-in-law of James Logan. This extended half a mile farther northwest towards the Perkiomen, and was 109 perches in width. It was then bounded by lands of Henry Hartzel, Thomas Thomas and the Manor lands. In 1779 we have record of a further purchase of twenty-five acres, bought of his brother John. His lands are now oc-

cupied by the farms of Joseph Landes, Frederick Voight, Joseph Strause, Amos Rosenberger, Henry Fellman and John Detwiler. These are all persons of the German descent.

Not a great deal is known of the personality of Mannasseh Thomas, though he was the last surviving child of old William Thomas, and his death took place only a little more than eighty years ago. Neither are his descendants so numerous as of the other brothers. He is represented to have been a pious, sober, industrious man, and quite saving and economical. He was a life long member of Montgomery and Hilltown churches and was wont to speak and exhort to the edification of his brethren. In his last will he left money to keep up the catechizing of the children of the congregation. This was complied with till the better training of the modern Sunday school came in to supply its place. A legend, redolent of the superstitious notions of our ancestors, is told, which may be related for what it is worth. Such ghost stories were told by the chimney fire during winter evenings of the olden times, and eagerly relished. It was told by David Riale, son of Evan Riale, many years after the death of Mannasseh Thomas, perhaps half a century ago. He was

then a young man, and his father proposing having a mowing frolic, sent him to invite the people living on one of the farms formerly possessed by Mannasseh Thomas. It was in the dusk of the evening—just the time for ghosts to move abroad. As young Riale approached the barn he espied the figure of an old man dressed in the garb of an hundred years ago. He wore the knee breeches, the shoe buckles, and cocked hat of the days of the Revolution. The apparition passed in full view, then rapidly glided behind the barn and was seen no more. It was the very face and form of old Mannasseh Thomas, hovering round to guard his buried treasures, as Riale

always afterwards declared. Tradition relates, no doubt truly, that during the Revolution Mannasseh Thomas secreted various pot and jars of specie within the walls of stone fences, and other hiding-places. There were fears of raiding parties of the enemy, and of forays of the Doans, who were ubiquitous, and came when least expected. There were no convenient banks, and it was quite natural for persons to, thus hide or bury money in a secure place. Doubtless, however, it was all recovered after the danger was passed.

Mannasseh Thomas died February 7, 1802, in his eighty-first year. His wife had died many years previous.

## CHAPTER XI.

## CHILDREN OF MANNASSEH THOMAS.

The children of Mannasseh Thomas were but three in number, Eber, Amy and Alice.

## EBER THOMAS.

There is some discrepancy about the statements regarding the age of Eber Thomas. According to the date on his tombstone he was born in 1771. At that time his father was fifty-one years of age, and may not have married till about 1770, when already a bachelor. Eber received the homestead where his father had lived. He married a cousin Zillah, a daughter of Job Thomas, and granddaughter of his uncle Thomas Thomas. His death took place October 16, 1807, at the age of thirty-six. Possibly this is an error and fifty-six is correct. His children were six in number—Eli, Enos, Alice, Ann, Lydia and Sarah. They all married and had children. Ann married Ashbel Mathias, January 14, 1817, and had two daughters—Elinor and Mary. Ashbel Mathias died in Lancaster county, February 26, 1826, at the age of thirty-eight. His daughter Elinor married Stephen Kerns. Had children—Mathias, Emily, Mary and Sarah. His widow removed back to Montgomery township. Mary Ann Mathias married Amos Tyson. Eli

Thomas married a Miss Weidner, at Germantown. Sarah Thomas married Hiram Jones, and had three or four children. Alice married Jesse Davis, and removed to Virginia. Zillah, widow of Eber Thomas, after his death married Robert Heaton, but had no children by him. She also survived her second husband, dying August 4, 1844, aged sixty-nine.

Lydia, the daughter of Zillah, married James Thomas, and removed to Seneca county, New York. Had children—John, James, Charles, Sarah, Ann, Margaret and Zillah. Sarah married a Collins, and Margaret a Piersol.

## AMY LUNN.

Amy Thomas married Elisha Lunn. They had children—Abner, Joseph, Thomas, Ury, Charlotte, Belinda, Jane, Zillah and Elizabeth. Abner Lunn became a physician and married Hannah Reller, and had one daughter who married a Glinn.

Joseph Lunn also became a physician, but remained unmarried. Thomas died young.

Charlotte married Thomas Sellers. Jane to Mahlon Heaton and Belinda married Levi Thomas.

*THE THOMAS FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.*

49

Elizabeth married John Beere, and had daughter Belinda, who is married to Samuel Aaron.

ALICE THOMAS.

Alice, daughter of Mannasseh

Thomas, died when a child of a dozen years. She is said to have been very promising and greatly beloved by her parents.

## CHAPTER XII.

## WILLIAM THOMAS, JUNIOR.

William was the youngest of the sons of Elder William Thomas, and we think the youngest of all the children. His birth took place about 1723. He married Abigail Day, daughter of Joseph Day. She was the only child of her parents, and in her youth her character was evil and wayward. After her marriage her attractions brought more admiration and attention from other persons than was creditable to a married woman. The prediction made by the father concerning William Thomas will be remembered, though he did not mention his name. He was the only one that took to intemperate ways, and was cut off in his prime when scarcely more than forty years of age. Supposing his marriage to have taken place previous to 1750, he lived thereafter fourteen years, during which he had three children, William, Joseph and Martha. His death, which occurred in July, 1764, was of a tragical character and caused a great sensation at the time. He was found dead one morning within the doorway of his house with a dark streak around his neck, as though strangled. The night had been dark and he had been away from home, drinking. It was strongly hinted and suspected that his death happened through foul means.

An investigation took place. His wife was accused of the deed, or as being accessory, and tradition says she stood her trial at Newtown, but was acquitted for want of sufficient evidence. The event happened so long ago, that the facts are now only retained through tradition by a very few persons. The widow afterwards married a German named Philip Bitting, and had a family. Many of her descendants were among the most worthy and respectable of our citizens. She also outlived her second husband and died in Philadelphia at a good old age in 1811, and was buried at Hilltown. In her latter days, she became a penitent, and is believed a Christian woman. She joined the Hilltown church in 1800.

William Thomas received large landed possessions from his father, comprising 290 acres. His patrimony was situated on the southwestern side of the township, bordering on the county line. It comprised a large part of the first purchase of 440 acres, bought by his father of Jeremiah Langhorne in 1718. His father erected a separate house for each of his children, but as William remained longest at home we do not know whether his house was his father's residence or



otherwise. The presumption is that here he resided. There were four or five ancient dwellings on the 440 acres—one on the Detwiler farm, where his father lived; one on the Hinely farm, one near the present dwelling of Jacob Rosenberger, and one on the Rosenberger farm along the county line. At the death of his sister Anna, in 1759, he received 100 acres additional, making him the possessor of 390 acres in all. This, with twenty acres additional, he sold in 1764, just before his death, to a German named Jacob Cope for £675. This comprised the present Hinely and Cope farms, together with the mill property, on the Neshaminy, near the county line.

It is somewhat singular that William Thomas made his last will whilst so young a man, unless he already was threatened with a mortal disease. It creates a suspicion that his wife, antici-

pating his coming to an untimely end, had prevailed upon him to do so lest he die intestate. This will was made January 20, 1763. In this he devised fifty acres to his son William "together with the mansion house," when he should be twenty-one years of age. Thirty acres lying along the county line were given to his daughter Martha, now owned by Jacob Rosenberger. His wife Abigail received a white mare and the use of 100 acres of land, the same that had been devised to Anna Thomas. This was to go to Joseph Thomas when twenty-one, but was afterwards sold to Jacob Cope. William, 3d got the bulk of his landed estate. He says that his two minor sons should be apprenticed to trades, when arriving at sixteen years of age, which was done. James Lewis was made his successor as a trustee of Hilltown church.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## WILLIAM THOMAS, THIRD.

William Thomas, No. 3, was born previous to 1753, as he is mentioned as a taxable in Hilltown in 1774. His death took place March 28, 1819, when he was at least sixty-six years of age. He married Mary Morgan, and by trade was a mason. Piece by piece nearly all his great patrimony passed into alien hands and out of the family name. In 1782 he sold to John Shellenberger twenty-one acres. In 1789 he sold to a German named John Detwiler, 155 acres, comprising the home of his grandfather. The grandson of the purchaser now holds a portion of it. At that time, if not before, he resided in a log house, which stood near the present dwelling of Jacob Rosenberge. This was about 20x25 feet in size, and was torn down in 1824. This was the west corner of the 440 acre tract, and the next year that had to go too. He held the office of collector of taxes for Hilltown. These taxes were received, but through his own necessities, he applied the money to his own use, probably intending to replace it. This he was unable to do. The sheriff of the county came along, in the person of William Chapman, who seized the property and sold it to a German from Hatfield, named Isaac Rosenberger. This occurred in 1790,

and the Rosenberger family retain it to the present day. Mary, his wife, died April 12, 1810.

The children of William and Mary Thomas were five in number, of which we have the names of William, John, Martha and Morgan. Mathias gives an account of only one, the first named, William. The latter married Mary Stephens, daughter of William Stephens, of New Britain, and had several children. After the death of his first wife he married Christiana Heaton, and removed to Cincinnati, Ohio, and had a second family of children.

William S. Thomas, a son of William Thomas fourth, by his first wife Mary Stephens, was a very worthy man, a useful and public spirited citizen. He was by trade, a shoemaker and afterwards kept store in New Britain and Tradesville. He died on a farm, now belonging to Charles R. Grove on the State road, Doylestown township, on the last day of December, 1849. In 1845 he was chosen county commissioner of Bucks by the Democratic party. He married Eliza Swartz, granddaughter of Benjamin Mathews, and daughter of David and Margaret Swartz, who died January 12, 1852. They had one child only, Edwin Thomas, who married in

New Jersey, and lives in Woodbury, near Rahway, that State and has children. William S. Thomas and Eliza, his wife, were both great-great-grandchildren of Elder William Thomas. And it is curious that the name William for the eldest son was perpetrated for five generations in succession. Mary Thomas, sister of William S. Thomas, married Oliver Hines, who removed to Columbus, Ohio, where he became quite wealthy. Another sister, Sarah, married in Cincinnati, in which place the remainder of her family reside.

## JOSEPH THOMAS.

Joseph Thomas, son of William and Abigail Thomas, married Mary Kelley, daughter of Erasmus and Hannah Kelley. They were quite poor, "lived in low circumstances," Mathias says, and left no posterity.

## MARTHA VASTINE.

Martha Thomas married Amos Vastine. This latter name was often called "Wilderness." The Vastines, Shannons, Lunn and Kelleys were Hilltown families, that were not of Welsh extraction, but by association, marriage and common religious faith were closely connected with the Welsh of that township. They readily assimilated with the latter people, as did not the Germans. The Shannons and Kelleys were probably of Scotch-Irish origin, whilst the Vastines were of Hollander extraction. The Lunn came from England. Vastine was originally *Van de Woestyne*, which meant "of the wilderness." The original settler also was the first who pushed his way into the wilderness of the northern part of the township, so that the name was quite applicable to him.

Amos Vastine was a carpenter, and

had several children, viz.: Benjamin, Jonathan, Amos, Isaac, Hannah and Martha. Benjamin married Catharine Eaton, and had children, Peter, Benjamin and Elizabeth. Of these, Benjamin, junior, married his first cousin Dorothy, daughter of Amos Vastine, junior, removed to Chester county, and had two daughters. Her father, Benjamin, died about 1830, leaving a handsome property. His widow married Robert Shannon, and had a son and daughter, Robert and Catharine. Elizabeth married Eliam Morris, and removed to Chester county. Amos Vastine, junior, married and had two daughters, Dorothy and Mary.

Jonathan Vastine married Elizabeth Lewis, daughter of John and Ann Lewis. He and his family removed to Shamokin, in Northumberland county. They had a family, and their descendants are supposed to be numerous in that region. Benjamin Vastine, above mentioned, was married the first time to——and had a daughter Mary, who became the second wife of Josiah Lunn, about 1792, and left children, Benjamin V., Josiah, Thomas and Lewis (twins), Elizabeth, Alice and Catharine. Josiah Lunn owned a farm in New Britain on the Hilltown border, half a mile east of the upper Baptist meeting house. It was for many years owned by Joseph Jones in later times. This he bought in 1801, where he built a stone house and barn, and where he died February 4, 1827, from mortification of the great toe. Of his children by Mary Vastine, Elizabeth married David Evans, November 16, 1820, and died July 16, 1826, less than six years after. David Evans was a very estimable man and public-spirited citizen. He was a carpenter by trade, and after living many years

in Philadelphia, he received a fortune from his brother Robert, who had died of yellow fever in New Orleans in 1835. He removed to New Britain and built a fine house in 1841, now owned by the Keeley family, where he resided till his death, having previously married a second wife, Mary Rowland, by whom he had a family of children. He died 1856. His children by Elizabeth Lunn were Mary and Robert. Mary married Charles S. James, for many years professor of mathematics at Lewisburg University. Robert married Anna Margaret Brunner and resides in Philadelphia.

Benjamin V. Lunn married Elizabeth, daughter of Joshua and Margaret Riale, of Doylestown township, and had two sons. Josiah and Benjamin. Benjamin Lunn, senior, died at Columbus, Ohio, in 1834. Thomas Lunn, junior, married Sidney Thomas, daughter of Mathew and Lydia Thomas, whose son Lewis removed to Columbus, Ohio. Lewis, Alice and Catharine Lunn, remained unmarried, whilst Josiah Lunn, junior, removed to Natches, Mississippi. After the death of Josiah Lunn, senior, his

widow, with her family, removed to Columbus, Ohio.

Hannah Vastine, daughter of Amos and Martha Vastine, married Erasmus Kelley, and had children, Sidney and Hannah, whose history has already been related on previous pages. Sidney married Ephraim Thomas, her second cousin, and had children, Erasmus, Elias, Matthew and Ephraim.

Concerning the remaining children of Amos Vastine, Isaac and Martha, the writer has little information.

Amos Vastine, survived his wife and died in Chester county in 1833, whither he had removed to live with his daughter. His wife had been born in 1756, and died November 7, 1822, aged sixty-six. He was probably over eighty years of age at the time of his death. Of them, Mathias writes that "they resided on a lot of thirty acres, bordering on the county line, now Jacob Rosenberger's, which Martha had inherited from her father. She was a discreet and prudent woman. Amos was a kind husband and industrious man, but had some peculiarities about him not altogether agreeable."



## CHAPTER XIV.

## ANNA THOMAS.

Concerning Anna, one of the two daughters of Elder William Thomas, the narration must necessarily be very brief, inasmuch as she left no posterity. She was born about the year 1719. Grew up a young woman, continuing to live with her father up to the time of his death. The prediction concerning her fate made by her father whilst she lay sick of a fever has already been related. In her father's will made in 1753, she is spoken of as single. She was then thirty-four years of age, and did not marry till late in life, or nearly forty, at an age when single women are denominated "old maids." Her husband was Stephen Rowland, a shoemaker, whom she married in August, 1757. The latter was her junior by three years, having been born in Wales in 1722. His parents, Owen and Jane Rowland, came from Wales in 1725 with four sons and one daughter, Evan, Thomas, John, Mary and Stephen. They first settled in New Castle county, Delaware, and gave the locality the name of Welsh Tract, which has continued to the present day. A flourishing Baptist church there exists, situated northwest from Wilmington, near the Pennsylvania line. They had two children after their arrival in Dela-

ware—Modesai and Martha. About the year 1727 they removed to Bucks county, settling on the North branch of the Neshaminy, near the present village of New Galena. It was this family which gave name to the township of New Britain, which had previously been called "Hilton." They had numerous descendants, whose history it does not pertain to this work to relate.

Anna Rowland, died May 14, 1759, at the age of forty years. A tombstone in Hilltown graveyard gives her age and date of her death. Stephen Rowland her husband, remained living in New Britain, and was blessed with a long life of nearly ninety years. He died in 1811. He married a second time to Rebecca Davis, daughter of William Davis, and had seven children, Owen, Thomas, John, Stephen, William, Margaret and Mary.

Anna Thomas inherited from her father 100 acres of land, originally comprised in the 440 acre tract first bought of Langhorne in 1718. This was the south corner of all the Thomas lands, bordering on the county line and had the Neshaminy for its west boundary. It is now comprised in the properties of Cornelius Heinly, Abraham K. Cope, and several others, and

on which is the mill of Benjamin Rosenberger. An ancient house, the site of which is yet apparent, stood in the meadow along the creek, a hundred yards distant, and south of the present Hinely dwelling. Whether it existed in the days when the Thomas' held possession is not known. Mathias says, that William Thomas built houses for each of his children, daughters as well as sons. If so, this may have been the one erected for Anna,

and where Stephen Rowland lived during his brief married life with her. By the terms of the will, these lands reverted to William Thomas, junior, at the death of his sister. He sold it just before his death in 1764 to a German named Jacob Cope, a part of which is yet owned by his descendants. A public school house now stands on part of this land adjoining the county line, and the village of Hockertown, or Unionville, is partly situated thereon.

## CHAPTER XV.

## GWENTLY THOMAS.

The notice of Gwently Thomas has been reserved till last, though she was by no means the youngest child of Elder William Thomas. She was the third, coming between John and Ephraim, and though we have no exact record it is supposed she was born in 1716. The name is a favorite one with the Welsh people, and was more properly spelt "Gwellian." Mathias uniformly gives it as Gwently, probably for greater convenience. Even in some old deeds it is further shortened to "Gwen."

The date of her marriage must be fixed as early as 1736. At that time she was at least twenty years of age, and her eldest son was born in 1737. Her husband was Morris Morris, son of Cadwallader Morris, who came from Wales. There is some dispute as to whether the Morris family is English or Welsh. People of that name undoubtedly came from both countries. Mathias says that this branch came from Wales, as did John Morris, who owned large tracts of land in Hatfield. The Morris family owned a large tract in Hilltown, bordering on the New Britain line.

The children of Gwently Morris were Cadwallader, Abraham, William, Benjamin, Enoch, Joseph and

Morris, and two others who probably died young. An old deed says that there were nine children. After the death of Morris Morris his wife was a widow for a long period. In the list of taxables for 1774 we have the name of Gwen Morris, but not of her husband. She is also recorded in 1770 as a member of Montgomery, and also as one of the constituent members of Hilltown in 1781. His death took place November 11, 1767, at the age of fifty-five years, he being born in 1712.

Gwently Morris received from her father all of the 106 acre tract bought of Rowland Ellis, save the four acres set off for the meeting house grounds. Its situation and boundaries have already been described. It bordered the New Britain line and comprised the picturesque declivities rising toward the northwest to the Bethlehem pike, and was intersected by a rivulet watering a meadow enclosed by the highlands on either side. On the easterly side of this meadow the original dwelling was built by her father, probably near the present residence of Jonas Leidy. As was the case with her sister Anna, she only held a life right in this property, it devolving at her death to her eldest son, Cadwalla-

der. These old Welsh were very strenuous about keeping their landed estates in the male line. Concerning the personality of Gwently Morris we know nothing. She was doubtless a pious and reputable woman, and left a numerous posterity, many of whom are widely scattered in other parts of the country. She died in April, 1785, at the age of sixty-nine.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE CHILDREN OF GWENTLY MORRIS.

Cadwallader Morris, the eldest son of Gwently Morris, and who inherited the ancestral property of his mother's, was born in 1737. He was a man of talent and considerable education for those times, and learned the trade of a saddler. He became a school teacher and surveyor, was a man widely known at that period and was sought after for his skill and knowledge concerning many things. He married Elizabeth Kastner—a name not belonging to Hilltown, at a later period. His death took place August 23, 1812, at the age of seventy-five. His wife survived him a few years. His children were five in number—Alice, Abel, William, Rebecca and Hannah. Before proceeding with the account of these children, we will give something more about the Morris family. Cadwallader Morris is believed to have been descended from Thomas Morris, who came from Moreland in 1721, and bought 300 acres of land of Charles Brockton. This was in Hilltown and New Britain, but mostly in the former. It was a mile long and nearly a half broad, lying around and adjacent to Fretz's mill. Cadwallader Morris was therefore the great-grandson of Thomas Morris, if this supposition is correct. The latter was of an English

Quaker family. Morris Morris, husband of Gwently Thomas, inherited 267 acres of land lying here, which he possessed, and bequeathed to his son Cadwallader, the latter paying his brothers and sisters different sums of money. This was mostly sold to various parties along between 1780 and 1790. In 1776 he sold 100 acres in Hilltown to his brother Benjamin, who in 1783 sold it to Martin King. The 100 acres received by Gwently from her father were sold in different parcels: The homestead, with sixty-three acres, in 1789, was bought by Isaac Morris, who removed to Line Lexington in 1805. Other portions were sold in 1783 and 1788 to Jonathan Mason, George Sheip and Mark Fretz. Cadwallader Morris is remembered as a school teacher by persons now living, who informed the writer that they were taught by him. This indicates that he continued teaching till old age, or up till about 1810, when he taught in the schoolhouse attached to the old Mennonite meeting house, Line Lexington.

An arm chair in an excellent state of preservation which belonged to Morris Morris is still owned by Oliver G. Morris, of Line Lexington. It is certainly upwards of 150 years old. A

cane also owned by the latter, and of equal antiquity, comes down as an heirloom from the same ancestor.

We first find mention of Thomas Morris in 1706, when he bought 105 acres of land in Moreland of Nicholas More. He is there spoken of as a citizen of Philadelphia county. He made his will on August 25, 1743, being then "aged and weak in body." His death took place in the spring of 1747. In his will he gave his son Thomas, junior, all his lands and tenements. The name of his wife was Janet, who survived him. No other sons are mentioned, save that Elizabeth Morris, daughter of his son Isaac, receives a legacy of £10. John Bartholomew, of Montgomery, and Lewis Evans, of Hilltown, were made trustees of his will, which was witnessed by Benjamin Griffith, Evan Thomas and Henry Jones.

#### THE NAME OF MORRIS.

Morris is one of sixty most common names in England and Wales, ranking thirty-third on the list. In Scotland it takes the form of Morrison, and is quite numerous. Says Arthur in his etymological dictionary of family names, "Morris," (Welsh) from Mawr and Rys, a hero, a warrior, a brave man. Marth, the great, the warlike, same as Maons. Another writer says it was formerly variously spelled Morys, Moris, Morris, Morice, Morrice, Mawrice, etc., and compounded by various initial expressions, De, Mont, Fits, Clau, etc. Some families bearing the name are of Welsh extraction. Mawryce being the Welsh form of Maons (Mars) the God of war, anciently given to a valorous chieftain of that country. One of the Welsh family mottoes has reference to the etymology, *marte et masi faventibus*. The other Morris

are supposed to be of Moorish blood, their progenitors having come over from Africa by way of Spain into various countries of Western Europe at an early period. It is a well-known fact that the Morice dance, and several other branches of magic lore were introduced into these regions many centuries since by natives of Morocco. The professions of these arts enriching themselves by their trade, seem in some instances to have embraced Christianity, and to have become founders of eminent families. Certain it is that certain magnates bearing the name of Morice, Fits Morice, Mont Morice, attended William the Conqueror in his descent upon England, and acquiring lands, settled in that country. The name Mont Moris is said to signify "from the Moorish mountains."

Says Lower: This common surname, which is, as has been written Morris, Morice, Maurice, Morys, Moris, Morrish, Mawrice and Morse; which gives rise to the patronymical forms, Morrison, Morrisson, Morson, and found associated with various prefixes, such as Fitz, Clau, Mont, De, etc., may be traced to various sources. Of the English families of that name, observes Burke: "There are two classes, those of native and those of foreign extraction. The latter came over with the Conqueror. Of the former the most ancient are derived from Wales. One section of the foreign class had a Moorish origin, and crossed over from Spain, whence they introduced into England and other European countries the Morice dances, and other feats of dancing. From the same derived the source is name Montgomery, corrupted from De Mont Morisce, or "of the Moorish moun-

tains," and thence abbreviated into Morris. With respect to the second class of the foregoing origin, the name is stated to be a corruption of Mars, or Maons, the God of war. This, as well as the succeeding derivation may appertain to many constitutional families, but it is in Wales that it most indubitable applies to the indigenous families who bear the name of Morris, of which the following derivation is given by a very eminent genealogist: Mars, Maons, Wallice, Mawryce, and warlike, powerful, is a term applied to such of the ancient chieftains as were pre-eminent for valor, whose numerous descendants account for the great frequency of the name in Wales.

To these observations, which are in the main correct, I must add that the personal name Maurice is still retained as a surname, and it may, in numerous cases be the origin of Morris, and similar family derivations. It is possible that in cases the English Morris might be the corruption of the French Du Marais, Du Marsey, Latinized De Marisco, and means "of the marsh."

As before mentioned, Cadwallader Morris, the school teacher had children Alice, Abel, William, Elias, Rachel and Hannah. Of these, the writer knows little. Hannah, married Zephaniah Brittain, and had a son also Zephaniah, who was living up to 1835. The name of his wife was Edith, and he resided near Heistand's mill. They had two sons, Benjamin and William, who removed elsewhere.

Abel Morris married Mary Dungan, daughter of John and Ann Dungan. They had several children. Of these, Seneca Morris married Jane Evans, daughter of Walter and Mary Evans. His second wife was Sarah, daughter

of Nathan Thomas. He died in Delaware, in 1882. His wife Sarah had died in 1864, aged thirty-seven.

William Morris married Hannah Black, and his brother Elias married a Huntsman and both had families in Plumstead. William had children Jacob and Hannah. Jacob married Katie Weisel.

Alice Morris married William Dungan, whose son married Gainer Bitting. They lived in Chester county, and the latter in Lancaster. After the death of William Dungan, his widow married John Watson, by whom she had several children.

Rebecca Morris married Uriah Mathews, and had family.

Abraham Morris married Rachel Pugh. The latter was born in 1742, and died September 18, 1820, of paralysis, at the house of her daughter, Mary Evans. She was a constituent member of Hilltown in 1781. They had three children: Mary, Ann and Elizabeth. Mary married Ezra Evans, and had children, Robert, Ellen, and Joel. Ann married James Morris, son of John Morris. James Morris inherited 160 acres of land on Pine Run in New Britain, now Doylestown township. His son John, still living at the age of ninety-three, resides on part of the ancestral property. He married Margaret Garner, and had children, George, James, Eli, Abraham, Ann Elizabeth, and Martha. The latter daughter married Samuel Williams, and the former Henry Keller. James Morris, ancestor of this branch of the family, was the son of John Morris, who first bought land on Pine Run, in 1754, of Joshua Riale. He was no relative to his wife, Ann Morris, but was of a Welsh Baptist family,

who long possessed an old Welsh Bible.

Elizebeth, daughter of Abraham Morris, married a Miss Chivers, of Philadelphia. After his death she married Morris Morris.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

William Morris, son of Morris Morris and Gwently Thomas, was born in 1739. He married Ann Griffith, daughter of Nathaniel Griffith, in 1763. The latter lived in Hilltown where stood the old tavern at Leidytown, and which property William Morris afterwards owned. They both died at the house of their son Isaac, at Line Lexington. His wife was born in 1744. William removed to Chester county in 1794, where he resided for a number of years. After the marriage of all his children he returned to Bucks county. He died April 22, 1821, at the age of eighty-two. His wife soon followed on the 17th of July, 1821, at the age of seventy-seven. William and Ann Morris had children, viz: Isaac, Benjamin, Morris, Eliam, William, junior, Griffith, Ann, Elizabeth and Huldah.

Isaac, born 1764, was twice married. He bought the ancestral homestead of Gwently Thomas, his grandmother, in 1789, which he held to about 1805, when he removed to Line Lexington. His first wife was Elizabeth Mathias, whom he married October 12, 1786. This wife was the daughter of Thomas Mathias, and sister of Rev. Joseph Mathias. She had been born September 12, 1765, and died August 28, 1803, aged thirty-eight. By his first wife Isaac Morris had three children, Mathias, Justus and William. The two latter died young. Mathias Morris was born September 12, 1787. He possessed unusual abilities. Says

Mathias: "He was early inclined to learn and from year to year and from school to school he pursued his studies as opportunity afforded. Even when at home, reading and study was his delight and he was taught several of the higher branches. He also made considerable proficiency in classical literature at Newtown, Doylestown, and other places. He studied law with his cousin, Enos Morris, and was admitted to the bar at Newtown in 1809, where he lived some time. He afterwards removed to Philadelphia, but removed back to Doylestown. He there married Wilhelmina, daughter of Abraham and Elizabeth Chapman, and sister of Hon. Henry Chapman." He became possessed of a lucrative practice and a handsome property. In 1828 he was elected to the State Senate, and had a re-election to the same office. In 1834 he was chosen a member of the Congress of the United States, and re-elected in 1836. He would probably have reached higher honors had not death overtaken him November 9, 1839, at the age of fifty-two. His widow still resides in Doylestown with her daughter, Mary Ann, who married John C. Lyman, of Vermont, and had a family of children.

The second wife of Isaac Morris was Rachel Dungan, widow of Joseph Dungan and daughter of Benjamin Mathews, Esq., whom he married April 6, 1806. She had been born February 21, 1771. She was a person of much intelligence and vivacity of mind as well as business tact and ability. She was a good and estimable woman in all the relations of life and her warm and steadfast piety sustained her in hope and cheerfulness through the vicissitudes of a long life. She died August 1, 1856, at the age of



eighty-five. Her husband had died September 13, 1843, at the age of seventy-nine. Isaac Morris had three children by his second wife, Oliver Goldsmith, Burgess Allison, (twins), and John D. Morris. The first named died a young man, 1826, at the age of nineteen. Burgess married Mary, daughter of John Riale, Esq., in 1836. She died soon after leaving one son, Oliver G. Morris, of Line Lexington, who inherited the ancestral property. He married Susannah, daughter of Michael Snyder, and has a family of children. He was a member of the Legislature from Montgomery county for three years 1870 to 1872 inclusive.

John D. Morris, born April 9, 1811, became a lawyer and practiced his profession for many years in Stroudsburg. He represented Monroe county in the Legislature in 1850. He afterwards held responsible offices in the Philadelphia Mint and Custom House under the administrations of Presidents Pierce and Buchanan. He was an excellent man, of good capacities, affable and agreeable in manner, and quite popular among his acquaintances. His wife was Sarah Hollinshead, of Stroudsburg, but he left no surviving children. He died in Line Lexington, at the house of his nephew, Oliver G. Morris, January 5, 1868.

Benjamin Morris, son of William Morris, married in Maryland and had children. Concerning his descendants the writer has no information.

Morris Morris learned the art of surveying with his uncle Cadwallader. When he was a young man he went to Uniontown, Fayette county, and afterwards married a daughter of 'Squire Springer, of that place. He prospered in life, grew influential, and was chosen

High Sheriff of that county. He died about 1830.

Eliam Morris married Elizabeth Vastine, daughter of Benjamin and Catharine Vastine. They had a family, and lived near Waggontown, Chester county.

William Morris, junior, in his youth followed his brother Morris to Fayette county. He, too, was hospitably entertained at the house of 'Squire Springer and secured the affections of a second daughter. He lived in Uniontown and had a family of children.

Griffith Morris, the youngest son of William Morris, likewise made his way to the house of the Uniontown Justice and secured a third daughter for his wife. He lived afterwards in that region.

Ann Morris married Miles Griffith, son of Abel Griffith, and grandson of Rev. Benjamin Griffith, first pastor of Montgomery church. Miles Griffith took his grandmother's maiden name for his first name. His father was a preacher of the gospel and pastor of the Baptist church at Salem, New Jersey, in 1770. He frequently preached at Montgomery, but finally settled with the church at Brandywine, where he continued many years. It is said that he fell from his chair whilst at supper and died. Had sons, William, Abel and Horatio, and daughters Sarah, and another, who married a man named Potter. Of these William lives near Niagara falls, in New York State. Abel lives in Iowa and Horatio near Uniontown, Fayette county. Mrs. Potter first removed to Ohio, and then to the oil regions of Pennsylvania, and Sarah married and resides near Ashland, Ohio. Thus the family all removed from Chester county.

Elizabeth Morris married George



Philips, of Sadsbury, Chester county. They had two children, John Morris Philips and George Washington Philips, the first born in 1812 and the latter in 1818. George Philips was the descendant of a Welsh emigrant who came to America in 1754. John M. Philips was twice married, first to Mary J. Boyd, of Sadsbury, and had one child. Both mother and child died a year or so after the marriage. His second wife was Sarah Jones, daughter of Judge Thomas Jones, of Tredryffrin, Chester county. They had seven children, viz.: Mary Jane, Thomas J., George M., Charlotte, Elizabeth, Caroline J., Sallie and John T. The last is a youth as yet unmarried, and Sallie is deceased. Caroline married Matthew Boyd, Charlotte married Preston E. Hannum, Thomas to Harriett Chalfant and Mary Jane to Daniel Bright, of Lewisburg. George Morris Philips married Elizabeth Marshall Pyle. He received a collegiate education at Lewisburg University, and is now the principal of the State Normal School at West Chester, an institution containing upwards of 300 pupils.

George Washington Philips, the youngest son of George Philips, married Serena King. Had two children—Elizabeth and George D. Elizabeth married Rev. Charles Young, of New Jersey, and has two children, Wayland and Charles.

George Dallas Philips married Jennie Goodman, and had children—Bessie, Charles and George. They reside near Atglen, in Sadsbury.

Huldah Morris, the youngest daughter of William and Ann Morris, married Joseph Rambo, of Chester county. They had four children, concerning whom the writer is not informed.

## BENJAMIN MORRIS.

Benjamin Morris, born 1748, married Mary Mason, daughter of Jonathan Mason. The latter lived at New Britain, where he bought the present Keeley farm in 1764. He left numerous descendants. Benjamin Morris is among the list of Hilltown taxables of 1774, and in 1776 bought 100 acres of his brother Cadwallader, part of the original Morris lands. This he sold to Martin King in 1783. He became a famous clockmaker, manufacturing those old fashioned tall clocks, now so highly prized by antiquarians and others. Many of these clocks are still in existence in Bucks county and bear the name Benjamin Morris. In person he was a large, fleshy man, so that he was known as "fat Ben Morris." He died April 2, 1833, at the age of eighty-five, and his wife January 7, 1813, aged sixty-two. He had children to the number of a dozen. Their names were Mason, Enos, Benjamin, Jehu, Rachel, Catharine, Mary, Martha, Sarah, Patience, Peninnah and Euphemia.

Mason Morris was a clockmaker by trade. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Enoch Thomas. He removed to Ohio in 1818.

Enos Morris also was a clockmaker, and wrought at it for several years. He possessed ability other than mechanical, and relinquished that calling and studied law with John Ross, at Easton. He was admitted to the bar in 1800. He settled at Newtown, and he was reckoned a good and safe counselor and prospered in his profession. His imperfect hearing prevented his being an advocate before the court and jury. He was twice married, both times to widows, and quite handsome women. His first wife was Mrs. Elizabeth Hough, by whom

he had several children, among whom was a doctor, Horatio Morris. His second wife was Ann Leedom, widow of Richard Leedom. There were no children by his second wife. One of his daughters married John Lloyd, who lived at Doylestown. His son Enos Morris Lloyd, was a lawyer for many years in the latter place and married a daughter of Dr. William Hendry. His son, Henry A. Lloyd, till recently practiced law in Doylestown, where his father died in 1875. James Lloyd, another son, is a physician in Philadelphia.

Benjamin Morris, junior, married Mrs. Larue, formerly Kinsey, and had one daughter, Caroline, still living and unmarried. He was a man of talent and notoriety, was influential in politics, and in 1830 was elected to the office of Sheriff of Bucks county.

John Morris was never married and lived with his father and sister Catharine. He was a school teacher. His death took place March 17, 1833, in his forty-second year.

Catharine Morris in her youth was reckoned a handsome woman, the flower of the flock, and had many admirers, yet she never married. Her death took place October 27, 1838, at the age of sixty.

Rachel Morris, eldest daughter of Benjamin Morris, senior, married Thomas Rowland, son of Stephen Rowland. She died a year after marriage without children.

Mary Morris married William Magill, who learned the art of clockmaking with his father-in-law. They had several children, among whom were Robert, William and Albert.

William Magill, lived in Doylestown, and died September 16, 1824. His son William, junior, married Elisa Brunner,

leaving a son Morris Magill, now of Philadelphia, and daughters Kate and Mary. Albert Magill married Jane Mann. Had children—Theodore, Eugene, Howard, Mary and Edwardine. Robert married, and had children, Alfred A. and a daughter who became Mrs. Cox.

Martha Morris married Dr. William Williams. We have record of the wedding day as being February 2, 1806. He was a son of Isaac and Elizabeth Williams, and studied medicine with Dr. David Thomas. He removed to Miami, Ohio, in May, 1818, where he was successful and prosperous, and had a family of children.

Sarah Morris married Joseph Burrows, and had a family, concerning whom the writer is not informed.

Patience Morris married Dr. Erasmus Thomas, of New Britain. They removed to Indiana in 1838. The names of his children have already been given.

Euphemia Morris married David M. Miller, October 21, 1821. They removed to Ohio, where she died.

#### ENOCH MORRIS.

Enoch Morris was born about 1750. He married a woman named Caldwell. When the Revolution broke out he became a Tory, and fled to the British army during the winter of 1778, when the latter held possession of Philadelphia. Thomas Lewis, Edward Jones, William and Evan Thomas, Henry Appenzeller and other Tories of Hilltown went along with him. In consequence for this treason their lands were confiscated, for which they received other lands in Nova Scotia, whither they removed after Great Britain's unsuccessful attempt to conquer her colonies. We have no knowledge of the after life of Enoch Morris.

James Morris, his son, certainly lived in Pennsylvania in his youth. He was of an adventuresome and roving disposition. In his youth he took a sea voyage, and was captured by the piratical Algerines, and the crew were, for a time, held in cruel bondage. The American government intervened and the exploits of Commodores Preble and Decatur before Tripoli resulted in their liberation. Returning to Philadelphia he married a Miss Hobson, and moving to the vicinity of Cincinnati, Ohio, became prosperous and wealthy. His death took place in 1832, leaving a family. A son of his became an officer in the army after graduating at the West Point Military Academy.

#### JOSEPH MORRIS.

Joseph Morris was born about 1752. He married Susannah Heaton, widow of David Heaton and daughter of John Jones. In the year 1774 he is rated as a single man, living with his mother, showing that his marriage had not taken place. It probably did not take place before 1785, inasmuch as his wife was the mother of five children by David Heaton, before the death of the latter. Joseph Morris was an intemperate man, of whom, Mathias says sententiously "He was a noisy fellow, and never did much good, and was no credit to the name of Morris." He had

only one son, John, who grew to manhood and then died. Susannah Morris, widow of Joseph, died January 27, 1834, aged eighty-four. Her husband had died many years previously.

#### MORRIS MORRIS, JUNIOR.

Morris Morris was the youngest son of Morris and Gwently Morris. He was born about 1756. He, too, married a widow, Elizabeth Butler, daughter of Joseph Thomas, whose first husband had been Abiah, grandson of the celebrated New Britain Squire, Simon Butler. His father had been Simon Butler, junior, who married Rebecca James. Joseph Thomas belonged to a different family from that of Hilltown, his father, Owen Thomas, being a Welsh Baptist preacher, who came to America in 1707. Morris Morris had three children by his first wife, Abner, Amelia and Eliza. Amelia married Evan Evans, son of Walter Evans, and had a family. Eliza married, but had no children. Abner was twice married and had a family of children. Morris Morris married a second time, and had one daughter. Of his character Mathias says that he was intemperate and "had his high times when sipping the flowing bowl." He was drowned in the west branch of the Neshaminy in Hatfield in November, 1806, whilst yet in the prime of life.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE GRIFFITH FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.

Though not directly pertaining to this history, some facts are added concerning the Griffith family of Hilltown. As it will be perceived by referring to the descendants of Ephraim Thomas, it is quite probable that a branch of the Griffiths in Chester county are descended from Margaret Thomas who married Richard Lewis.

## THE ANCIENT WELSH GRIFFITHS.

We learn from *Burke's Peerage* that Owen Gwynedd ap Griffith was the eldest son of Griffith ap Cynan, King of North Wales. This Owen Griffith, Prince of North Wales, was a chivalrous defender of the independence of his country against the English, and died in 1219, after his distinguished reign of thirty-two years. His son, Owen Griffith, succeeded to the throne, but was deposed by his brother Llewellyn, who assumed the sole sovereignty of North Wales. He was attacked in overwhelming numbers by the forces of Edward I, and slain at the battle of Builth, in the Valley of Wye, December 21, 1282. He had been married to the Lady Elinor, daughter of the Earl of Leicester, by his princess Elinor, widow of William, Earl of Pembroke, and second daughter of John, King of England.

Evan Griffith, who came to America,

was the son of Howell Griffith, who lived in Pembrokeshire, Wales. He embarked for America in 1704, but was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and carried to New Spain. He was among those afterwards ransomed by the British government, reached our shores and first settled in Montgomery, but afterwards in Hilltown, where in 1726 he bought 150 acres of Thomas J. Walmsly. In 1738 he bought 350 acres of John Plumly. A part of the latter afterwards became the property of Adam Cope. His wife's name was Mary and they had ten children. His death took place in 1758 and his farm was willed to his son Nathaniel, and by the latter to his son Benjamin, who removed to Honeybrook, Chester county, in 1798.

The children of Evan Griffith were, Nathaniel, Catharine, Sarah, Elizabeth Jacob, John, Abraham, Isaac and Howell. Beginning with the latter, Howell Griffith married Elizabeth Pugh. Their daughter Margaret married Jacob Hendricks, and had thirteen children, of whom six lived to maturity. These were Aaron Hendricks, who lived near Telford, Harriet, who married an Eckert, Frances, who lived near Point Pleasant; William, who removed to Ohio, near Columbus; Jacob,



who went to Philadelphia, and Charles, who married Margaret Thomas.

Isaac Griffith married Phoebe Morris, and lived in Hilltown. Abraham married Margaret Llewellyn, John married Sarah James, and removed to Culpepper county, Virginia; Jacob married Mary, daughter of John Mathias, of Hilltown; Elizabeth married John Lewis, Nathaniel to Elizabeth Davis, Sarah to Thomas Bates and Catharine to Theophilus Williams.

The children of Nathaniel Griffith were two sons and two daughters. Of these Benjamin married Martha Lewis, supposed to have been the granddaughter of Ephraim Thomas. They removed to Honeybrook, Chester county, just east of Waynesburg. Benjamin Griffith had children—Abner, Abel, Nathan, Amos, Benjamin and Elizabeth. The two latter never married. Amos married Elizabeth M. Connell, and died in 1883, aged

ninety-four. Nathan to Mary Souders, Abel to Sarah Miller, and Abner to Catharine Shannon, daughter of the widow Vastine. Thomas Griffith, of Honeybrook, is the son of this Abner Griffith. He married Christiana McCamant, of Lancaster county, and had children—Elihu, Abner, Heisinger, Mary and Elizabeth. Of the latter, Mary married Robert Young, of Coatesville, and Rebecca to John S. Hope.

Daniel Griffith, son of Nathaniel, married Ann Morris, and removed to Genesee county, New York. Ann Griffith married William Morris, and Sarah married Robert Heaton. Margaret, daughter of the latter, married Lewis Bitting.

Sarah, daughter of Evan Griffith, married Thomas Bates. Had children—Thomas, junior, who married Ann Darrah, and Rebecca, who married Job Thomas, whose descendants are previously mentioned.



# THE THOMAS FAMILY OF HILLTOWN.

## INDEX.

The Thomas name and its origin—Rev. William Thomas.....	2
Morgan Thomas—Ann Custard—Alice Mathias.....	19
Elizabeth Godshalk—Esther Williams—Job Thomas.....	20
Amos Thomas.....	21
Jonah Thomas.....	22
Asa Thomas.....	23
Anna Brittain, wife of Nathan Brittain.....	33
Rebecca Pugh, wife of Daniel Pugh.....	34
Sarah Blackwell, wife of John Blackwell—Leah Jones, wife of Samuel Jones .....	35
Enoch Thomas.....	39
Margaret Lewis, wife of Richard Lewis—Elias Thomas.....	40
Dinah Mathews, wife of Benjamin Mathews.....	41
Rachel Mathews, wife of John Mathews—Sarah Mathews, wife of Joseph Mathews.....	43
Elinor Mathews, wife of Edward Mathews—Joseph Thomas—Ephraim Thomas, Jr.....	44
Eber Thomas—Amy Lunn, wife of Elisha Lunn.....	48
Alice Thomas .....	49
Joseph Thomas—Mathias Vastine.....	53
The name of Morris.....	60
William Morris.....	62
Benjamin Morris.....	64
Enoch Morris.....	65
Joseph Morris—Morris Morris, Jr.....	66